A Companion to Schopenhauer

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Edited by
Bart Vandenabeele

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To Veerle, Sarah and Eline
with all my heart

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B.V.

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A Note on Cross-References

A system of cross-referencing has been deployed throughout the volume. Only chapters outside the section in which a particular chapter appears are cross-referenced. Readers are advised to examine all chapters in any given section where a chapter they wish to consult appears. The decision of where to place a chapter was made on the basis of where it would gain its greatest pertinence and relevance.

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used for Schopenhauer's writings:

BM	*On the Basis of Morality*
EFR	*On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* [i.e. Schopenhauer's *Early Fourfold Root*, 1813 edition]
FR	*On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* [second edition, 1847]
FW	*On the Freedom of the Will*
MR	*Manuscript Remains*
PP I; PP II	*Parerga and Paralipomena*, vols. 1 and 2
VC	*On Vision and Colours*
WWR I; WWR II	*The World as Will and Representation*; vols. 1 and 2
WN	*On the Will in Nature*

Unless otherwise specified, the number immediately following the work's abbreviation gives a volume and page reference to the work listed here. The contributors to this volume have used different editions of Schopenhauer's texts, but have sought to provide reference to an English source where available. Some have relied exclusively on their own translations. Exact references are given at the end of each chapter.

Introduction

Arthur Schopenhauer

The Man and His Work

BART VANDENABEELE

It is safe to say that Arthur Schopenhauer, who was born in Danzig (now Gdansk) in 1788 and died in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1860, was always an outsider among philosophers. He was considered as too literary and rhetorical by analytical philosophers, too metaphysical by the logical positivists and scientific naturalists, and was too unhistorical and apolitical for the Hegelians and phenomenologists. Moreover, he was totally neglected or dismissed by philosophers such as Russell, Sartre, Heidegger, Adorno and Levinas, and by "postmodern" authors such as Derrida and Lyotard. And, although recent scholarship has begun to show a change of attitude, it is still often the case that, if contemporary philosophers study Schopenhauer's oeuvre at all, they are often more interested in its influence on Nietzsche, Freud or Wittgenstein than in reading his work for its own sake.

Engaging with Schopenhauer's philosophy is, however, a tremendously rewarding experience. Not just because of the extraordinary qualities of its prose, but perhaps even more so because of the generous cosmopolitan world view it conveys, the relentless search for truth it displays, the clarity of its arguments and its deeply human concern with the sufferings, pleasures and values of human (and animal) existence. It will be hard to find a more genuine and comprehensive example in the history of philosophy of such an honest quest for truth, human value and inner peace and salvation, for it does not refer solely to Western philosophies (above all Plato's and Kant's theories of knowledge, being and value), but is also deeply and passionately engaged with the Vedic, Hindu and Buddhist outlook on perception and consciousness, asceticism and mysticism, and animal and human life and death (see Chapter 18 by Cooper).

The kernel of his thought is to be found in his *magnum opus*, *The World as Will and Representation*, which was published in 1818 – when Schopenhauer was hardly 30 years old. This extraordinary work is undoubtedly one of the richest philosophical books in Western history. It not merely offers a complicated metaphysics of the will – the blind drive that pervades everything – but also expounds intriguing theories of nature,

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the self, art, and scientific, religious, aesthetic and ethical values, and yields a fascinating naturalistic account of knowledge and perception, which severely criticizes Kant's epistemology (see Chapter 1 by Bozickovic, Chapter 2 by Guyer and Chapter 5 by McDermid).

At the instigation of his cosmopolitan father, who abhorred Prussian nationalism and was very ambitious for his son, Arthur studies French and English at an early age, and later also Italian and Spanish. He receives a broad and enriching education at school. In *The World as Will and Representation*, he frequently quotes ancient Greek texts and offers his own Latin (!) translations – to help the ignorant reader. At a fairly early age, he also visits most important museums in the European cities. When he turns 14, his parents offer him to join them on a tour around Europe, but only on the condition that he abandon his plans to become an academic and agree to commence an apprenticeship in the trading business. Young Arthur does not hesitate and joins his parents on their European tour. It is hard to imagine nowadays what such a long journey through Europe must have meant to a young boy in those days, but – as we can learn from his letters and notes – it clearly deeply affected him. During this European tour, he becomes not merely impressed with the rich European cultural and artistic heritage, but also significantly astonished at the wretched circumstances in which so many people live. It makes him lose his faith in God for the rest of his life, and this strong concern with the suffering of human beings and animals never leaves him and pervades his whole philosophy. Schopenhauer has to keep his promise to his parents and starts his business apprenticeship. Meanwhile, however, he develops a much keener interest in natural sciences and independently reads several scientific books.

On April 20, 1805, when Arthur is 17 years old, his father – whose intense and formidable personality he has inherited – is found dead in a canal in Hamburg. His father's death is officially the result of an accident, but more probably the man committed suicide. This is a terrible shock to Arthur, and he vigorously blames his mother for his father's death. Relations with his mother have never been good, but after his father's death, his relationship with his mother becomes more and more problematic. In one of her letters (dated May 17, 1814) his independently minded mother, Johanna, who has now become a successful novelist and who runs an artistic salon, writes that she cannot tolerate Arthur's behavior any longer and threatens him that the door that he has slammed behind him, will forever remain closed. She complains that meeting up with her son again will severely damage her health and does not want to see him again.

In 1809, Schopenhauer moves to Göttingen to study natural sciences and two years later to Berlin, where he attends Johann G. Fichte's philosophy classes (see Chapter 25 by Zöller). Under the influence of the Göttingen philosopher Gottlob Ernst Schulze (1761–1833), he now especially concentrates on the work of Kant and Plato. This influence will last for a lifetime: he will desperately (though not always successfully) aim to combine Plato's and Kant's theories. In 1813, he moves to Rudolstadt, near Weimar, to complete his first essay, entitled *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, which gains him a doctoral degree in philosophy at the University of Jena, followed by his underestimated essay *On Vision and Colours* (1816), in which he develops a fascinating theory of the nature of color, influenced by Goethe, who did not appreciate Schopenhauer's criticism of his own earlier views on the subject.

His earliest work, the dissertation on *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, analyzes the principle that "nothing is without a reason for its being," which Schopenhauer considers to be the best general formulation of the principle of explanation. In this work, which was first published at the age of 26 and which Schopenhauer considers the "basis of his whole system," he offers a brilliant analysis of causation and related issues, which definitely rivals the more famous discussions of David Hume, and argues that perception is the product of understanding (*Verstand*) or intellect (*Intellekt*). We do not experience the things as they are in themselves but the understanding shapes them according to the subjective forms of space, time, and cause and effect. The empirical objects do not exist independently but are products of the senses and the understanding: the understanding applies the concept of causality to the raw sense data and turns them into intuitions and, thus, into empirically perceived objects. Furthermore, human beings are able to form abstract representations, i.e., concepts, which enable them to engage in abstract thought, which is a major evolutionary advantage compared to other animals but concepts can also degenerate into empty abstractions, in which – as Schopenhauer will not hesitate to stress again and again – German idealist philosophers often lose themselves completely.

Schopenhauer considers this work so crucial for a proper understanding of his whole philosophy that he will add many new ideas to it in later life. Readers, who struggle with the first book of *The World as Will and Representation*, will definitely profit immensely from studying this essay first, as it offers the indispensible tools for his epistemological theory and philosophy of science (see Chapter 1 by Bozickovic, Chapter 2 by Guyer, Chapter 3 by Jacquette and Chapter 5 by McDermid).

In *On Vision and Colours*, which was first published in 1816 and of which a revised version appeared in 1847, Schopenhauer convincingly defends Goethe's theory against Newton's. The first part of the book focuses on visual perception and addresses several key arguments in favor of transcendental idealism and develops fascinating issues concerning the nature of visual perception. In the second part of this exciting essay, Schopenhauer sets out to reduce the problem of the nature of colors and their perception to the strictly physiological (i.e., non-chemical and non-physical) problem of color perception. Clarity, darkness and color are modifications of the eye, which are directly perceived and can be reduced to modifications in the activity of the retina. Anticipating many philosophical and scientific theories and hypotheses (especially those of Wittgenstein and Young-Helmholtz), Schopenhauer expounds a theory of the color spectrum and develops a landmark synthesis of Newton's and Goethe's views. He persistently situates the phenomenon of color in the physiological subject – by which he surpasses Goethe's perception theory and interestingly modifies Newton's "physical" theory. For Newton characterized color as determined by the properties of light rays and focused on the light sources, and Goethe emphasized the contribution of the physical media which light rays meet as they travel to the eye. Schopenhauer, however, treats color as a physiological phenomenon and focuses on the effects in the retina and not on the physical or chemical sources that cause them (see Chapter 4 by Lauxtermann).

Schopenhauer is already brooding over an even more important project, however, which will result in one of the most important books in the history of philosophy. He is convinced that this book will guarantee him a place in the top ranking of famous philosophers. He is not even 30 years old when he finishes what will indeed become his

most important work: *The World as Will and Representation*. The book – which will become known as the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation* – is published in 1818 (although 1819 is mistakenly mentioned on the cover).[1]

His *magnum opus* consists of four books: Books I and III address the world as representation, II and IV the world as will. The first book of this unparalleled work treats epistemological topics and aims to prove that "The world is my representation" (WWR I, 3). Schopenhauer further develops his own critical version of a (Kantian inspired) transcendental idealism, i.e., the view that the subject is "the universal condition of all that appears, of all objects, and it is always presupposed" (WWR I, 5). The subject of cognition constitutes a world of representation (*Vorstellung*) according to the subjective forms of space, time and causality. On Schopenhauer's account, this implies that there can be no objects without subjects, but not that there can be no subjects without objects. This leads to his notorious theory of the self as "will," i.e., the thought that there is a mode of being that is purely subjective: the will. The will (and hence, also the self) cannot be objectified, can never become an object for a subject. The will, which is the kernel of the self and analogously also of the whole world, is thus the true "thing-in-itself." The whole world of representation is ultimately a dream world: the substance of reality, viz. the will, generates the things that appear to us, and since we are also products of the will, we ourselves too produce the objects that we perceive, although we are not conscious of this activity.

Schopenhauer's will is ultimately cosmic energy that manifests itself objectively, but without being conscious of this objectifying activity (see Chapter 6 by Desmond, Chapter 7 by Neeley and Chapter 10 by Wicks). It is a blind irrational striving, beyond good and evil; raw energy, without any direction. We are all expressions of this amoral, aimless cosmic drive. The cosmic will manifests itself in different layers, the first of which consists of the "immediate objectifications" of the will, i.e., the universal, timeless forms of things, which are called (Platonic) Ideas (see Chapter 9 by White); within the second layer, in which the will manifests itself "indirectly," human subjects become aware of stimuli, motives, reasons, i.e., those causes Schopenhauer identified as the roots of the principle of sufficient reason (cf. supra). Human beings do not make up a privileged, higher order than other natural beings, but are *embodied* creatures that are determined by their will, i.e., their affects, desires, urges and emotions (see Chapter 8 by von Tevenar). Contrary to Kant, Schopenhauer does not believe that rationality gives human beings more dignity or moral worth. The subject of cognition is thus ultimately nothing but a manifestation of a blind striving, which is neither individuated nor situated in time–space.

The third part of *The World as Will and Representation* illuminates how human beings can perceive the universal essences, i.e., the (Platonic) Ideas, through will-less, objective perception of natural objects and artworks, and develops fascinating accounts of artistic creativity, the beautiful and the sublime. Under the influence of Plato and the *Upanishads*, the young Schopenhauer characterized aesthetic perception as a "better consciousness" that transcends ordinary experience, which is typically boring or full of suffering, as it is determined by the will and its frustrations. Now he describes aesthetic experience, and especially contemplating a work of art, as a privileged state of consciousness that brings about objective cognition of universal Ideas. In aesthetic con-

templation, "we no longer consider the where, the when, the why, and the whither of things, but simply and solely the *what*" (WWR I, 178). Nothing disturbs us, for we have become a pure, disinterested and painless subject of knowledge. We are, as it were, momentarily "rid of ourselves" (WWR I, 390), for we are raised above our willing, striving and yearning, and have become one with the object of perception and have reached an exceptional state of repose and complete tranquility, which offers "objective" insight into the universal (Platonic) Ideas (see Chapter 12 by Korab-Karpowicz, Chapter 13 by Kossler, Chapte 14 by Neill and Chapter 15 by Vandenabeele), or directly – as is the case with music – into the metaphysical will (see Chapter 11 by Hall).

The fourth book of *The World as Will and Representation* aims to describe what kinds of action qualify as morally good. Actions from compassion are a case in point, since they show that human beings are able to transcend their natural egoism – which is dictated by their will to life – and sympathize with the pain and suffering of others. This kind of moral awareness does not, however, provide lasting salvation, and only when our will "turns around" and "a repugnance towards the will to life itself" arises (cf. WWR IV, § 68), are we able to reach a more permanent state of a kind of (Buddhist or Daoist) "happiness," which can only occur if we are completely nauseated by the amount of suffering in the world, eventually deny the will to life and abolish the willing self altogether (see Chapter 16 by Came, Chapter 17 by Cartwright, Chapter 18 by Cooper, Chapter 19 by Gemes and Janaway, and Chapter 20 by Soll). Then we have reached "a condition," which "is indicated by the names ecstasy, rapture, enlightenment, union and which should not actually be called knowledge, because it no longer has the form of subject and object" and "is not further communicable" (WWR I, 410). This aspect of Schopenhauer's philosophy has often been severely criticized for being morose and hostile to life. Schopenhauer's ethics does not ultimately involve a grim outlook on the world and bleak pessimism, though. On the contrary, it brilliantly shows the moral value of a special state of compassionate awareness in which one is genuinely appreciative of the worth of having less individual desires.

Schopenhauer is genuinely convinced that he has completed one of the most important books in the history of philosophy and leaves on holiday to Italy to get some well-deserved rest. He visits Venice, Bologna, Naples, Florence, Rome and Milan. When in Venice, he is very keen on meeting the notoriously charming poet, Lord Byron, and has managed to obtain a letter of introduction, written by Goethe, who has just finished his *Italian Journey*. On one occasion, during a walk on the Lido beach, his jealousy prevents him from actually making Byron's acquaintance, for Schopenhauer's female companion screams a bit too enthusiastically when she sees Byron riding his horse on the beach, and Schopenhauer's desire to meet him suddenly diminishes.

In the meantime, Schopenhauer's trip through Italy not only seems occupied with beauty, but even more strongly with beauties. While trying to find a suitable "female companion," he learns about the birth of a daughter in Dresden, the result of a brief affair, who dies after two months. Further, he also learns that his mother's and sister's Danzig investment house is on the verge of bankruptcy, and he decides to return to Germany in July 1819, shortly before the death of his daughter.

On returning to Germany, he faces another shock, for hardly any copies of his book have been sold. His *magnum opus* will remain unnoticed for many years to come. Arthur

is, of course, tremendously disappointed, and when he learns that his mother is very successful with her novel-writing, and regularly receives important intellectuals in her salon, he becomes even more depressed. Moreover, his archrival Georg W.F. Hegel – who epitomized about everything Schopenhauer abhorred – has become a very successful academic, and has assumed Fichte's chair at the University of Berlin. Schopenhauer plans to counteract the neglect of his book by aiming to become a university professor himself. Unfortunately, he schedules his first lecture series at the University of Berlin at the same time as Hegel's, with the result that hardly a few people attend Schopenhauer's first class, whereas Hegel's lecture room is packed. Schopenhauer is furious and immediately abandons the plan to become a university professor.

The following years will be extremely hard. Schopenhauer does some translation work: he translates, amongst others, Baltasar Graciàn's great *Oraculo manual y arte de prudencia* (1647) [*The Art of Worldly Wisdom*] from Spanish into German, which will be published posthumously in 1862. In 1831, a cholera epidemic breaks out in Berlin and Schopenhauer decides to leave the city, while Hegel stays. He asks the actress Caroline Medon, with whom he has fallen in love, to accompany him, but she insists on taking her eight-year-old son with her, which he refuses. So he leaves Berlin alone and moves to Mannheim for a year, but then returns to Frankfurt-am-Main in 1833, where he spends his days with writing, walking, playing the flute, dining out, going to the theatre and the opera, and reading *The Times*. He will stay in that city until his death in 1860. He gradually recovers from his depression and in 1836 he publishes the captivating essay *On the Will in Nature*, hoping to show how recent scientific discoveries and advances in anatomy, plant and animal physiology, astronomy etc. corroborate his doctrine of the will (see Chapter 10 by Wicks).

In 1838 – the year of his mother's death – and in 1839, he enters for essay competitions set by the Royal Norwegian and the Royal Danish Scientific Society, for which he submits two fine essays, dealing with ethical problems. The first, "On the Freedom of the Human Will," will be awarded the first prize by the Norwegian Society; the second, "On the Basis of Morality," part of which offers a trenchant critique of Kant's ethics, expounded in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and other works, will not be awarded a prize, because it contains too many insults against Hegel and other idealist philosophers.

In the remarkable essay "On the Freedom of the Human Will," Schopenhauer distinguishes three kinds of freedom: physical, intellectual and moral freedom. Physical freedom refers to the absence of material obstacles, intellectual freedom occurs when an individual understands the world correctly, and moral freedom concerns the question whether individuals at a given time are able to take any course of action they *will*, which ultimately boils down to the intricate issue of whether the human willing is subject to necessity or not. Schopenhauer argues that human willing is determined by the motives that enter into consciousness and, hence, is not free.

In the second essay, "On the Basis of Morality," Schopenhauer attempts to demolish Kant's foundation of morality, and offer his own positive view of the basis of morals. Kant's foremost error, Schopenhauer contends, is to conceive of morality as a matter of duties and imperatives. Schopenhauer argues that Kant's categorical imperative is really hypothetical, and he even claims that Kant ultimately realized this. The idea that one cannot will maxims of injustice and unkindness is ultimately grounded in the

hypothesis that human beings are fragile. Schopenhauer argues that if human beings happened to be (or to think of themselves) as sufficiently powerful or reckless, willing maxims of injustice and unkindness would *not* be impossible. According to Schopenhauer, the highest maxim and ultimate foundation of ethics is not human rationality, but the principle "Harm no one, and help everyone to the extent that you can." Being morally good implies developing an attitude towards life that consists of *Mitleid* (i.e., compassion, literally "to suffer with"), which is the very opposite of cruelty. Moral goodness consists in "a deeply felt, universal compassion for every living thing" (BM, § 20). But Schopenhauer's ultimate foundation of compassion, and hence of morality, is to be situated in his metaphysics: the compassionate man's outlook of the world is ultimately more "right" than that of the cruel, immoral or indifferent individual, for the separateness of individuals is ultimately illusory (see Chapter 16 by Came, Chapter 17 by Cartwright, Chapter 8 by von Tevenar and Chapter 19 by Gemes and Janaway). The compassionate man "knows" that his outlook on life tallies with the deepest truth about the world: that it is one and the same will. Attuning your character and actions with this ultimate metaphysical truth offers the only real foundation of moral value and good conduct; we imaginatively feel the others' feelings *as our own*, and through this a moral community of sentient beings will be formed – a universal social bond between cosmopolitan people, which ideally culminates in the elimination of all individual willing.

The two essays will eventually be published together in 1841 under the title *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*. In 1844, he also completes an additional volume to *The World as Will and Representation*, which he now publishes along with a new edition of the first volume, and which contains a series of excellent chapters that fall into line with the issues treated in the first volume. The second volume is actually longer than the first, and instead of rewriting his youthful work, both volumes will be published again together in a third edition in 1859, a year before his death.

In 1851, Schopenhauer's final new work is published: *Parerga and Paralipomena* [*Complementary and Omitted Matters*], which contains not only the popular "Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life" but also several other intriguing essays on such diverse subjects as education, suicide, reading and books, language and style, noise, religion, Indian literature, natural sciences, academic philosophy, etc., and which will eventually give him the recognition that he has been yearning for during his whole life. Not without sarcasm, he will say: "The comedy of my fame has finally come." He now receives visitors from all over the world, and also much fan mail; for instance, from Richard Wagner, who truly adores Schopenhauer's philosophy and sends him the libretto of the *Ring of the Nibelungs*. His portrait is painted and Elizabeth Ney comes from Berlin to make his bust.

Arthur Schopenhauer dies peacefully at home at the age of 72 on September 21, 1860. In the decades following his death, he will become one of the most prominent European philosophers in history, deeply influencing not only Nietzsche, but also Bergson, Freud, Horkheimer, Wittgenstein, and numerous artists and creative writers, including Beckett, Borges, Conrad, Dvorák, Gide, Gissing, Hardy, Huysmans, Kafka, Maeterlinck, Mahler, Mann, Proust, Schönberg, Turgenev, Wagner, and many others (see the chapters by Atzert, Bishop, Reginster and Schroeder). Over the last decades, interest in Schopenhauer has been growing again, after all too long a period of undeserved neglect of this unique virtuoso voice in the history of philosophy.[2]

Notes

1 The text of Volume I of *The World as Will and Representation* that we now commonly read is not the original 1818 version, but includes many changes made in 1844, including a modified "Critique of Kantian Philosophy" – which was heavily altered on the basis of Schopenhauer's discovery of the first (so-called "A") edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) – and several fresh polemical charges against the German idealists, especially Fichte and Hegel.

2 I wish to thank Veerle Rotsaert and Stijn Van Impe for helpful comments on this chapter.

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Part I

Nature, Knowledge and Perception

1

Schopenhauer on Scientific Knowledge

VOJISLAV BOZICKOVIC

There is a good deal of truth in the way in which Schopenhauer describes the contrast between the genuine philosopher and the academic scholar who regards philosophy as a sort of scientific pursuit.

(Schlick 1981, 41)

Philosophy is for Schopenhauer not a sort of scientific pursuit nor is science a sort of philosophical pursuit, and it is in this context that he propounds his view of scientific knowledge and of knowledge in general. Those few philosophers who have given it proper consideration, notably Gardiner (1967) and Hamlyn (1980, 1999), and more recently Young (2005), have pointed out that Schopenhauer's view presents some serious, seemingly insurmountable, difficulties. In this chapter I try to redress the balance by arguing that Schopenhauer can be credited with a coherent and viable, in some respects indeed very perceptive view of (scientific) knowledge once a couple of misconceptions, which are the source of these difficulties but which are neither required by this view nor are of any use to it, are disposed of. I offer instead some adequate replacements which are to its benefit, much as they are in line with the overall framework and the objectives of his philosophy. This will also enable us to assess this view in the context of the debates that have emerged in the modern-day philosophy of science and epistemology.

1. The Principle of Sufficient Reason and Knowledge

In *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (henceforth FR), Schopenhauer tackles the principle of the same name in the context of the relation that the knowing subject has to the object of knowledge, making his view of knowledge part of his account of this principle. This principle, which he calls the basis of all science (FR, 4),

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has for him four different forms sharing the same root, one of which is of particular interest for his view of scientific knowledge as obtained by the natural sciences. Owing to these interconnections, an examination of his view of scientific knowledge also needs to be an examination of this principle and of Schopenhauer's conception of knowledge in general. This is evidenced by what he has to say about this principle and its root.

Schopenhauer states the principle of sufficient reason as follows: "Nothing is without a ground or reason why it is" (FR, 6). Then he provides the statement of its root:

> *Our knowing consciousness, . . . , is divisible into subject and object, and contains nothing else. To be object for the subject and to be our representation . . . are the same thing. All our representations are objects of the subject, and all objects of the subject are our representations. Now it is found that all our representations stand to one another in a natural and regular connexion that in form is determinable A PRIORI. By virtue of this connexion nothing existing by itself and independent, and also nothing single and detached, can become an object for us.*
>
> (FR, 41–42; italics in the original)

All knowledge thus concerns representations. But no representation can become an object of knowledge if it is not grounded, if it does not have a reason, in other representations.

Schopenhauer then goes on to remark that it is this connection which is expressed by the principle in its universality. This connection takes on different forms according to the difference in the nature of objects, but it is still always left with that which is common to those forms and is expressed in a general and abstract way by the principle. Hence, the relations, forming the basis of the principle, constitute its own root. "Their number can be reduced to *four*, since it agrees with *four classes* into which everything is divided that can for us become an object, thus all our representations" (FR, 42). As will become clear, it is two of these forms that are of special interest for the aims and the scope of the present chapter – that of *becoming* and that of *knowing*, as Schopenhauer calls them.

2. Some Epistemological Distinctions

According to Schopenhauer, not all of our knowledge is conceptual. Our basic knowledge of intuitive or perceptive representations, i.e., of objects presented to us in our sensory perception, does not involve concepts. In order to have this kind of knowledge it is required by the principle of sufficient reason that objects stand in natural and regular connections, although the knower need not know what they are. Our knowledge of these regular connections, which amount to causal, law-like, relations, is also taken to be non-conceptual. When, on the other hand, it comes to conceptual, abstract knowledge, this principle requires that if a judgment (representation) – itself composed of concepts – is to express a piece of knowledge, it must have a sufficient ground or reason, for which it is further required that it be known by the knower (FR, 156). Non-conceptual knowledge is the business of the faculty of understanding, which has the one function of causal inference, while conceptual knowledge is the business of the faculty of reason, which has the one function of forming concepts. Since the perception of the non-linguistic animals is in relevant respects similar to ours, Schopenhauer

believes that they too have understanding though they do not use concepts, i.e., have no faculty of reason (see FR, 71–72; 110–11).

The following claims can be distinguished here:

1. In addition to conceptual knowledge of objects there is also non-conceptual knowledge of them.
2. In order to have non-conceptual knowledge of objects it is required that they stand in causal, law-like, relations which constitute their ground or reason.
3. Knowledge of causal, law-like, relations between objects is non-conceptual.
4. If a judgment is to express a piece of knowledge, it must have a sufficient ground or reason (to be specified below).
5. This ground or reason needs to be known by the knower.

One may think it impossible for us to apprehend causal, law-like, relations between objects short of applying any concepts (see Gardiner 1967, 121–22). If so, (3) is false and so is (2) insofar as it entails (3). One can also question (2) together with (4) and *a fortiori* (5) on a more general level by urging that our having the respective kinds of knowledge is not subject to the conditions respectively imposed on them by Schopenhauer in (2) and (4). Claim (5) may be found to be too severe; and (1) may seem problematic particularly because of its association with

6. The faculty of abstraction, pertaining to reason, which creates concepts by way of analyzing intuitive, i.e., perceptive, representations (e.g., FR, 146–47; see also WWR II, 66).

This doctrine, which Schopenhauer adopts from the British empiricists, is thought to be very dubious. On this issue Hamlyn remarks:

> How reason is supposed to abstract from perceptions remains, as with all doctrines of abstraction, unclear. If the abstraction is a cognitive act it must work on what is already known in the perceptual instances; but if something is indeed known in them they must surely presuppose already some concept of the object perceived. How then is that concept obtained? On the other hand, if the abstraction is not a cognitive act of that kind, but the concept comes into being, so to speak mechanically, it remains quite obscure what principles govern the selection of instances in such a way that they give rise to the concept.
>
> (Hamlyn 1980, 23)

(In order to assess Schopenhauer's view of knowledge, all these claims need to be tackled, but since claim (2) is not directly relevant to the topic of the present chapter I shall not deal with it here. See Bozickovic (1996) for a discussion of some of the issues concerning this claim.)

3. Non-Conceptual Knowledge of Objects

Claim (1) raises the issue of whether all our perceptual knowledge of objects is conceptual. Many recent philosophers would side with Schopenhauer in claiming that it is

not. One of them is Evans (1982) who has claimed that the content of perceptual experience is non-conceptual. In a similar vein, Chalmers (1996) has urged that the content of awareness and of experience is generally non-conceptual in that it does not require an agent to possess the concepts that might be involved in characterizing that content. As he notes, it is quite plausible that an animal such as a dog or a mouse might have fine-grained representations of color distinctions in the cognitive system, while having only the simplest system of color concepts (Chalmers 1996, 383). (Schopenhauer would, of course, deny that it possesses any concepts, but the point is the same.) Conceptual content comes into play only when one moves from a perceptual experience to a judgment about the world based on that experience, usually expressible in some verbal form (Evans 1982, 227). Judgments belong with beliefs as more sophisticated cognitive states connected with the notion of reasons (Evans 1982, 124; see also Chalmers 1996, 232).

It is important to note that Schopenhauer's distinction between non-conceptual and conceptual knowledge of objects is logically independent from the dubious doctrine of abstraction which he takes the shift from the former to the latter kind of knowledge to rely on. In spite of this doctrine, it was very perceptive of him to draw the distinction itself. To see its merit, we can think of it in the light of Evans's further suggestion concerning the links between the non-conceptual and the conceptual contents which does not rely on any operation of abstraction and with which the latter can be substituted on Schopenhauer's behalf. For Evans, perceptual experiences with non-conceptual contents are informational states. Yet, such states are not *ipso facto* perceptual experiences, i.e., states of a conscious subject. An informational state should count as an experience only if its non-conceptual content is available as input to a thinking, concept-applying, and reasoning system (Evans 1982, 157–58). In such a system, conceptual capacities first become operative when it makes a judgment of experience whereby a different species of content comes into play. This way, an unmysterious link between the two kinds of content is established without resorting to an operation of abstraction, and the full merit of drawing the distinction between them is recognized. (The existence of this distinction is still denied by John McDowell (1994) on the grounds that it is a requirement of having experiences that we are able to re-identify them under concepts. This requirement, however, seems to be gratuitous.)

By the same token, this applies to the link between *knowledge of* and *knowledge that*. It has been urged that (in the ordinary non-Russellian sense) knowledge of an object generally implies knowledge that something is the case with regard to it which is itself conceptual. Hence, knowledge of an object is something that one could not have unless one was already equipped with concepts to some extent (Hamlyn 1999, 57–58). Both these claims, however, are readily accounted for on Schopenhauer's behalf in terms of Evans's view while fully acknowledging the conceptual/non-conceptual distinction.

This requires that Schopenhauer's theory of concepts be readjusted. Other than dropping his reliance on the doctrine of abstraction, he would have to abandon the Kantian view of concepts as rules for classifying things, which, as pointed out by Young (2005), does not preclude that some of these rules are biological products of evolution also possessed by non-linguistic animals. Schopenhauer's objectives would be more adequately met by tying concept-possession to language as hinted at by Evans, i.e., by claiming that to have the concept of an X is to be able to use properly the word "X" (or

a word of a different language having the same meaning). In this way Schopenhauer could establish that a great deal of our knowledge about the world is non-conceptual. While his examples of this knowledge hover between knowledge we *do not* and knowledge we *cannot* articulate in words, it is the latter that, as Young puts it, makes his discussion of non-linguistic animals the crux of the matter (Young 2005, 44–45).

This view of concept-possession can also accommodate Schopenhauer's claim that, in accordance with (4) and (5) in their application to *concepts* rather than judgments, in terms of which they are stated above, our cognitive grasp of a certain concept (i.e., the meaning of a concept-word) is grounded in our cognitive grasp of other concepts (i.e., the meanings of other concept-words) which is also at odds with the doctrine of abstraction. For, being able to use properly the word "X" requires something like this on any view that rejects the doctrine of semantic atomism – the doctrine that one can grasp the meaning of a word without knowing the meanings of other words. (For a criticism of this doctrine, see Dummett (1981); see also Brandom (1994, 87–89), who takes inferential articulation to be a distinguishing mark of concept-use.)

4. Non-Conceptual Knowledge of Causal Relations

Consider now claim (3) – that knowledge of causal, law-like, relations between objects is non-conceptual. What Schopenhauer has in mind is that the faculty of understanding, which has the one function of causal inference, conceives every change in the phenomenal world as an effect and refers it to its cause quite directly and intuitively without the assistance of reflection, i.e., of abstract knowledge by means of concepts and words (FR, 103). That this is how every change is conceived is part of Schopenhauer's view that the subject's body is both the starting-point of all of his perceptions as well as being for him an object amongst objects liable to the laws of this objective corporeal world (FR, 124). Changes in the phenomenal world are governed by what Schopenhauer calls the law of causality. It is the principle that, "if a new state of one or several real objects appears, another state must have preceded it upon which the new state follows regularly, in other words, as often as the first state exists" (FR, 53). It is "known *a priori* and is therefore transcendental, valid for every possible experience, and consequently without exception" (FR, 20, 63). Since the relation between cause and effect is held to be a necessary one, this law authorizes us to form hypothetical judgments. In this way it shows itself to be a form of the principle of sufficient reason in which all hypothetical judgments must rest and all *necessity* is based. This form of the principle, which is of particular significance for his view of scientific knowledge, Schopenhauer calls the principle of sufficient reason of *becoming* because its application always presupposes a change, "the appearance of a new state and hence a becoming (*ein Werden*)" (FR, 63).

To be sure, for Schopenhauer this law, "the only form under which we are able to conceive changes at all, always concerns merely states of bodies . . ." (FR, 65; also FR, 111). This should also apply to those changes in organic nature whose explanation, Schopenhauer claims, refers us entirely to *final causes*. For, *final causes* need not be thought of as future states (WWR II, 327ff.). As for many philosophers of the past, the motion of bodies plays for him a fundamental role in his explanation of causation. With

them he shares the view that every change is reducible to it and explicable in terms of it. But, unlike them – notably unlike Kant – he, as we saw, considers the subject as an embodied agent whose body is for the subject an object among objects liable to the laws of this objective corporeal world. Yet Schopenhauer shares Kant's view that this law is imposed on us *a priori*, i.e., that it is unconditionally true. But it cannot be true if there are counter-instances to it as many philosophers have claimed. It has been claimed, for instance, that properties and states make a difference to future states of things or events in things. But, since they do not generate events, they are what philosophers call conditions or determinants rather than causes. This is to say that to talk of causality in terms of "anything that makes a difference," as Schopenhauer does, is too coarse to distinguish determination in general from causation or causal determination. But, even if this law is true, it does not follow that our experience must conform to it, as Schopenhauer would have us believe. In other words, it is not clear why every change is to be conceived as an effect that we refer to its cause even if it is an effect of a certain cause (let alone if it is not).

Claim (3) – that causal relations between objects presented to us in our sensory perception are non-conceptually apprehended by us – is thus part of the view that the law of causality is known *a priori*. Once this view is exposed, so, it seems, is this claim. For if not every change in the phenomenal world is conceived as an effect that we refer to its cause, it is not obvious that changes so conceived involve non-conceptual knowledge. (But we shall see below that there is a way to sustain this claim.)

5. Causal Regularity and Its Cognitive Status

Claim (4) is the claim that if a judgment is to express a piece of knowledge, it must have a sufficient ground or reason. The ground of the judgment: *Nothing happens without a cause*, which is for Schopenhauer *synthetical a priori*, is the law of causality known to us *a priori*. That is, this judgment "rests not merely on experience but on the conditions of the entire possibility of experience which lie within us" (FR, 160). If, as argued, the law of causality is not valid for every possible experience, then there is no reason either to suppose that this judgment, if true, is true *a priori*. Besides, it is not obvious that it is true. What is true, though, is that the regularity or necessity of causality of which Schopenhauer speaks – if not this principle itself – plays a special, privileged, role in scientific reasoning. Natural science aims to produce a complete theory of the world (in the sense in which it is concerned with it) whose role it is to exhibit all systematic relations between phenomena as consequences of certain fundamental natural laws. Many modern philosophers of science have held the view that these laws are deterministic or at least that deterministic laws occupy a central place in science. This is because the events of the kind mentioned in such a law can also be predicted by it and this can be achieved only on the assumption that there is a causal regularity between the events of the appropriate kind.

It is important to note that the truth of a single deterministic law requires the necessity or regularity of the relation between cause and effect captured by Davidson's slogan "where there is causality there must be a (deterministic) law." This claim about necessity is weaker than the claim that nothing happens without a cause in that it does not

entail it, yet it also faces a status problem. For it is doubtful that it can be established empirically since it cannot be proven inductively because the very possibility of induction seems to presuppose its truth and it is also doubtful that it can be established *a priori*.

The problem of the logical justification of induction, which goes back to Hume, has made many philosophers suspicious of induction, and Popper has even denied its existence in any form. We shall see shortly that although for Schopenhauer induction plays a part both in obtaining empirical knowledge as well as in its subsequent confirmations, the kind of induction that he employs is not in need of such a justification and therefore does not require a regularity of causality. But such a regularity is in any case required by Schopenhauer in order to authorize us to form law-like hypothetical judgments. It would be established *a priori* if Schopenhauer and Kant were right in claiming that the law of causality is valid for every possible experience, but we saw that they are not. That it is still a matter of our *a priori* knowledge but in a different, weaker, sense was pointed out by Popper. He argued plausibly in deference to Kant that our inborn expectation of finding a regularity – our "inborn knowledge" – although not valid *a priori*, is still psychologically or genetically *a priori*, i.e., prior to all observational experience, whereby it corresponds very closely to the law of causality. It is also logically *a priori*: it is logically prior to all observational experience; for it is prior to any recognition of similarities, and all observation involves the recognition of similarities or dissimilarities (Popper 1963, 47–48). If so, its application is non-conceptual, as required by (3), even though not every change is conceived as an effect that we refer to its cause. This law of causality takes precedence over scientific laws, yet it cannot make them infallible nor can it provide us with the logical justification of the kind of induction questioned by Hume. But it is more than a heuristic maxim which we can decide to adopt or abandon at will. And this might well be enough to authorize us to form law-like hypothetical judgments – given that for Schopenhauer our inborn expectation of finding regularity would be an expression of the will which itself governs all scientific activity in accordance with our practical needs, as we shall see below.

6. Induction and Scientific Method

Schopenhauer speaks of induction only in passing. In speaking of the origin of the first fundamental truths of astronomy as induction he says that induction is

> the summarizing into one correct and directly founded judgement of what is given in many perceptions. From this judgement hypotheses are afterwards formed, and the confirmation of these by experience, as induction approaching completeness gives the proof for that first judgement.
>
> (WWR I, 66)

This does not seem to involve the claim, condemned by Hume, that those instances of which we have had no experience resemble those of which we have had experience. For, induction seems to be taken here only as the process of summarizing previous perceptions (in which Schopenhauer follows Aristotle) as well as adding new ones

whereby it approaches completeness. It is perception of many kinds which confirms the truth of the hypothesis whose discovery is not an inductive step.

Elsewhere, Schopenhauer says that "every piece of empirical knowledge, obtained merely by induction, has always only approximate and hence precarious, never absolute certainty" (FR, 66), i.e., that it is never perfectly certain, but at most attains a high degree of probability (WWR II, 106). The probability of which Schopenhauer speaks is a kind of support the hypothesis gets from "perception of many kinds" which is a matter of its confirmation which, in Hamlyn's words (1980, 76), presupposes the putting forward of the hypothesis. New evidence, i.e., a large number of the enumerated consequents of the given hypothesis, will, on this view, give it a higher degree of confirmation by widening the scope of this perception: "empirical confirmation of many kinds brings the induction on which the hypothesis rests so near to completeness that in practice it takes the place of certainty" (WWR 1, 77). In contrast to induction or epagoge, apagoge – proceeding by way of *modus tollens* – "is always perfectly certain, and through a single, certain example *in contrarium*, achieves more than the induction does through innumerable examples in favour of the proposition laid down. It is so very much easier to refute than to prove, to overthrow than to set up" (WWR II, 106). This is, of course, something that hints at some of the central theses of Popper's *Logic of Scientific Discovery* concerning the asymmetry between the verifiability and the falsifiability of scientific theories which results from the logical form of universal statements (although for Popper, unlike for Schopenhauer, induction and probability have no role to play here whatsoever).

This seems to suggest that Schopenhauer sees the method of science as hypothetico-deductive (see Hamlyn 1980, 76). While this method is believed to explain scientific (notably physical) theory more adequately than the one proceeding by way of induction by enumeration (as in Bacon), it is found to be short of telling us how hypotheses are arrived at in the first place in that it treats the act of establishing them as a matter of psychology or sociology rather than logic. In contrast, it has been urged that the initial suggestion of a hypothesis is very often a reasonable affair and that "[i]t is not so often affected by intuition, insight, hunches, or other imponderables as biographers and scientists suggest. . . . If establishing an hypothesis through its predictions has logic, so does the conceiving of an hypothesis" (Hanson 1958, 71). However, Schopenhauer's view does not run counter to this insight. In describing the steps that are necessary for a scientific inquiry, Schopenhauer speaks of the stage in which the inquirer makes a comparison of relevant concepts partly with what is perceived, partly with one another, partly with the remaining store of concepts, so that correct judgments, appropriate to the matter, and fully apprehending and exhausting it, result from them; thus a correct examination or analysis of the matter (WWR II, 120). This suggests that he acknowledges that the putting forward of a hypothesis has a logic to it (which, we saw, is not inductive).

As for the logic of establishing a hypothesis through its predictions, we saw that epagoge and apagoge are for Schopenhauer its critical tools. He says that epagoge or induction is an inference from the consequents to the ground, "and in fact *modo ponente*" (WWR II, 106). This affirmation of the consequents is, of course, not taken to be a deductive (and hence fallacious) move but only a matter of inductive, probabilistic, support in the sense outlined above. Namely, a hypothesis having the form of a univer-

sal generalization will have a large (possibly infinite) number of observational consequences. These are the observational statements (expressing perceptual judgments in the sense of the foregoing discussion) which are entailed by it but do not entail it. In Schopenhauer's view, all they do is make the given hypothesis probable when they are true in which respect this view is similar to Hempel's (1966). Their entailing it would require that their truth be empirically established, which is something that we are incapable of. It could be established only "if we could freely pass through universal space and had telescopic eyes" (WWR II, 67). What we can do, though, is look for counter-examples which would falsify the hypothesis. For, to repeat, a single, certain example *in contrarium*, achieves more than the induction does through innumerable examples in favor of the proposition laid down.

7. Empirical Knowledge and Its Experiential Basis

We have seen that some kind of a regularity or uniformity principle is needed to lend support to empirical, notably deterministic laws, and Schopenhauer believed this to be the law of causality imposed on us *a priori*. In addition, he takes the *law of inertia* and the law of the *permanence of substance* to be two important corollaries that result from the law of causality, "and, because of this, are accredited as knowledge a priori and consequently as beyond all doubt and without exception" (FR, 64; also WWR I, 66–67). But, as with the law of causality, there is no reason why the law of inertia should hold without exception. As Poincaré has pointed out, this law is not imposed on us *a priori* since other laws would be just as compatible with the principle of sufficient reason. If a body is not acted upon by a force, instead of supposing that its velocity is unchanged, we may, Poincaré (1905, 91–97) claims, suppose that its position or its acceleration is unchanged. Along similar lines, it could be shown that neither the law of the *permanence of substance* is imposed on us *a priori*.

On the other hand, the law of gravitation is taken by Schopenhauer as empirically known. For we can *imagine* it as ceasing to act at some time, but we could never conceive this as happening without a cause (FR, 129). (Note that Schopenhauer is using the concepts of imaginability and conceivability interchangeably.) All empirical knowledge is for him knowledge of the causes from effects, whereby all natural philosophy rests on hypotheses which are often false, and then gradually give way to others that are more correct (WWR 1, 77). To know the cause from the effect means that the knowledge belongs alone to the consequent in so far as the ground, i.e., hypothesis, is given – which is to say that establishing the truth of the observational consequences of a certain hypothesis does not guarantee its truth. For it may turn out to be false; if so, it is being replaced with one that is more correct, which reveals Schopenhauer's belief, shared by many modern-day philosophers, that this is part of the process of the growth of scientific knowledge and of scientific progress.

In accordance with the principle of sufficient reason, all empirical judgments have their ground ultimately in experience, unlike the judgment: *Nothing happens without a cause*, which is for Schopenhauer *synthetical a priori* and whose ground is as we saw the law of causality known to us *a priori*. This is to say that an empirical judgment is either grounded directly in experience or in another judgment which is itself so

grounded, or on the series of judgments, on which this judgment is based, which leads back to one that is so grounded (FR, 157). The truth that such a judgment has is called material truth which amounts to empirical truth when the judgment is founded directly on experience. It is by means of the judgments of this type that scientific hypotheses are linked to experience in the process of their confirmation. In addition, the possibility of empirical verifiability is taken to be the criterion of meaningfulness (WWR II, 71). This criterion, which Schopenhauer shares with (logical) empiricists (as well as with others), is in its own right plausible at least in the sense in which its guiding thought is. This is the thought that a belief or judgment that is not linked to experience is spurious.

A judgment having empirical truth derives from experience thanks to the power of judgment as the mediator between intuition and abstract knowledge (FR, 159–60) which relies on the operation of abstraction dealt with above. But, once again, we can account for this link in terms of Evans's suggestion concerning the links between the non-conceptual and the conceptual contents which does not rely on any operation of abstraction. Nor does Schopenhauer's criterion of meaningfulness need to rely on it even though it is couched in terms of it.

8. Two Related Issues

On the face of it, the view that experience is the foundation of all empirical knowledge creates two problems for Schopenhauer, one having to do with knowledge in general, the other with scientific knowledge.

The former problem concerns the foregoing claim (4), i.e., the principle of sufficient reason of *knowing* – that if a judgment is to express a piece of knowledge, it must have a sufficient ground or reason – as well as claim (5) that this ground or reason needs to be known by the knower. A further, *inferential*, claim is that knowledge of such a ground consists in our ability to come up with an *inferential* epistemic justification of our belief. This applies to all empirical beliefs except for those featuring judgments that are founded directly on experience. Therefore Schopenhauer is not facing a vicious regress problem because the inferential chain terminates in these judgments.

To be sure, on all standard foundationalist accounts, basic beliefs that such experiential judgments give rise to have two features: they are epistemically justified and their justification does not depend on any further empirical beliefs. But it has been argued that this can be true only if one of the following two claims is abandoned: (a) for a belief to be epistemically justified for a particular person requires that this person be himself in cognitive possession of reasons; or (b) the only way to be in cognitive possession of such a reason is to believe *with justification* the premises from which it follows that the belief is likely to be true. (For full details of this argument, see Bonjour 1985, 32–33.) Now, to abandon (b) is to claim that the believer's cognitive grasp of the premises required for the justification of the given belief does not involve further empirical beliefs, which would themselves need to be justified. The given cognitive states are meant to be of a more rudimentary kind which do not themselves require justification, yet can be used to justify other beliefs; hence they are the ultimate source of epistemic justification. So, although the basic beliefs are the most basic beliefs, they are not the most basic

cognitive states. This would, however, conflict with Schopenhauer's *inferential* claim which makes no room for such rudimentary cognitive states. A better option for him would be to replace claim (a), i.e., claim (5), to which it amounts, with a weaker one requiring for a belief to be epistemically justified – and hence to amount to knowledge – that justifying reasons be available in the given situation, but not that the knower *himself* needs to be in cognitive possession of them. For all that (4) asserts is that if a judgment is to express a piece of knowledge, it must have a sufficient ground or reason, which is plausible in its own right. That we do not need (5) is on Schopenhauer's own terms made evident by the fact that he does not hold that having *non-conceptual* knowledge of objects requires that its ground be known by the knower. All that is required here for something to be an object of knowledge is, as we saw, that it stands in natural and regular connections, i.e., that it has a ground, as claimed by (2), whether the knower is able to see what it is or not. Had Schopenhauer applied this to the case of conceptual knowledge, he would have ended up with something like the modern-day externalist view – that what justifies a belief may be facts that are external to the subject's conception of the situation.

Epistemic justification plays an important part in Schopenhauer's philosophy in general. He believes, as we shall see below, that our quest for truth is governed by our practical needs and epistemic justification is instrumental in reaching this goal in that an epistemically justified belief is more likely to be true than one that is not. But this does not require that the believer himself be in possession of justifying reasons, i.e., that (5) be true. Note, though, that abandoning (5) in the present context does not require that it be abandoned in relation to our cognitive grasp of *concepts* in the case of which it is appropriate, as we saw above. As for scientific concepts, this also involves that they can be grasped only in conjunction with other concepts belonging to the same scientific theory, as has been urged by many philosophers of science.

The other problem concerns the pattern of scientific explanation adopted by Schopenhauer. In accordance with the principle of sufficient reason, he takes scientific explanation to be causal, hence deductive in character. There have been many recent philosophers who have also subscribed to this view (including Hempel before his *Philosophy of Natural Science* from 1966). Although this pattern is nowadays considered to be not universally applicable, it is still the case that many explanations in science comply with it and that many philosophers believe that scientists should strive to provide this kind of explanation whenever this is possible. According to it, a description of the empirical phenomenon to be explained is taken to be a logical (deductive) consequence of certain general (deterministic) laws and statements of antecedent conditions (see e.g., Hempel 1965, 249).

This pattern sets up a sharp distinction between theoretical and observational language which in turn places clear demands on an explanation that is deductive. If the explanandum consists of observational statements (judgments), correspondence rules are needed to link the theoretical meaning of the explanans with the observational meaning of the explanandum, formulating which has proved to be a difficult task. This is not the place to deal with this complex issue, but it needs to be mentioned here because the very viability of this pattern depends on how this issue is resolved, which is something that concerns Schopenhauer. (It should be noted in passing that making such a distinction between the meanings of the terms conflicts with the thesis of the

theory-ladenness of observational meaning insisted upon by philosophers such as Hanson and Kuhn.)

9. Scientific and Philosophical Knowledge

The causal relations that are captured by causal deterministic laws in terms of which scientific explanation is conducted are for Schopenhauer no more than universal regularities holding between phenomena, which is not to say that every empirical regularity constitutes a causal law. For behind the scenes these laws are ultimately governed by natural forces as "something on which no explanation can venture" and which do not depend on the principle of sufficient reason which "determines only the appearing, not *that which* appears, only the *How*, not the *What* of the phenomenon" (WWR I, 121). These forces *inter alia* include magnetism, gravity and electricity. For this reason, Schopenhauer insists that such a force is not a cause but only what imparts to every cause the possibility of acting (WWR II, 44; see also FR, 67–69).

Consequently, science cannot go beyond describing these regularities. The *What* of the phenomenon, i.e., the natural forces, are deemed to be incomprehensible because the statements we could use to talk about them could not be empirically verified. This would render them meaningless in the light of Schopenhauer's criterion of meaningfulness which we looked at above. In claiming this, he comes close to the view, shared by, amongst others, the logical positivists, notably Schlick, and more recently Van Fraassen (1980; 1989), who takes an empirical point of departure and goes on to claim that talk of causes (as something lying behind the phenomena) is metaphysical, as is talk of laws, necessities, and theoretical entities such as electrons.

The *What* of the phenomenon is thus the business of metaphysics for Van Fraassen and for Schopenhauer alike. In contrast, our concepts, which as we saw gain their meaning by being linked to experience, and with them our language as well as the whole of science, are solely concerned with the objects of the empirical world (i.e., with those relations laid down by the principle of sufficient reason) and in accordance with our practical needs (see WWR I, 177). If science is just a means of satisfying our practical needs, then its objective might well (be thought to) be an accurate description of the regularities between phenomena in a way that will enable us to make accurate predictions that will help us attain our practical goals – however simplified this view of the scientific enterprise might seem to be (e.g., to Gardiner 1967, 131ff.). In any case, the idea that science and language constitute the principal function in human activity by means of which humans rule over nature and maintain order in it is something that many philosophers subscribe to. Schopenhauer thinks that this is so because this activity is governed by the will and others have similar views: the intuitionist mathematician Brouwer, for one, thinks that it is a manifestation of the basic will to live.

By claiming that, unlike metaphysics, science is solely concerned with the *How* of the phenomenon, Schopenhauer does not mean to deny that they are interdependent. For one thing, he thinks that science, i.e., physics, needs a metaphysics on which to support itself. For although it is concerned with "the explanation of phenomena in the world," it is in the nature of physical explanations that they cannot be sufficient since laws of nature by means of which these phenomena are explained themselves rest on

forces of nature which can be explained only in metaphysical terms (WWR II, 172). For another thing, he thinks that metaphysics needs science as a sort of propaedeutics. For, "[n]o one . . . should venture on this without having previously acquired a knowledge of all the branches of natural science which, though only general, is yet thorough, clear and connected. For the problem must come before the solution; but then the investigator must turn his glance inwards" (WWR II, 178–79), i.e., towards the *What* of the phenomenon – towards the forces of nature. As Young (2005, 60) has aptly summed it up, philosophy needs science to tell it, with precision, just what the problem of understanding the whatness of the world amounts to.

Once this is done, i.e., once the investigator has turned his glance inwards, he proceeds – to paraphrase Schlick's epigram quoted above – as the genuine philosopher and not as the academic scholar who regards philosophy as a sort of scientific pursuit, an account of which is beyond the scope of the present chapter.

10. Concluding Remarks

It has been urged that reliance on the dubious faculty of abstraction, i.e., (6), needs to be dropped if the full merit of the distinction between non-conceptual (intuitive) and conceptual (abstract) knowledge drawn by (1) is to be recognized, an unmysterious link between them established, and the proposed criterion of meaningfulness given credence. This is, we saw, also required by (4) and (5) in their application to *concepts* in the case of which these claims were shown to be plausible. We also saw that (4), in its application to judgments, is plausible while (5) – which is not required even on Schopenhauer's own terms – needs to be replaced with a weaker claim hinted at above for the reasons given. The truth of claim (3), it was argued, would follow if the law of causality were valid *a priori* which is not so. But we saw that there is a different kind of law of causality that can be claimed to be known *a priori* although in a weaker sense than that insisted upon by Schopenhauer, yet meeting his objectives, one of which is to establish (3). Without affecting the objectives as well as the overall framework and configuration of his philosophy, these amendments have, I believe, enabled us to see his view of (scientific) knowledge as of a piece with certain views advocated in the modern-day philosophy of science and epistemology and to be approached and judged accordingly.

See also 7 The Consistency of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics; 10 Schopenhauer's *On the Will in Nature*: The Reciprocal Containment of Idealism and Realism; 15 Schopenhauer and the Objectivity of Art.

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2

Perception and Understanding

Schopenhauer, Reid and Kant

PAUL GUYER

Schopenhauer considered his thesis that "perception is essentially a matter of the *intellect*, and not merely of the *senses*" (WWR II, 19)[1] to be one of his great discoveries, in which he had been anticipated only by Thomas Reid (WWR II, 20) but which Kant had failed to recognize, at least consistently. There certainly are similarities between Schopenhauer's view of perception and Reid's, although there is the great difference that Reid's view is part of a confident although non-naïve realism while Schopenhauer's view is part of a radical version of idealism. So we need to understand how these two philosophers could have come to very different conclusions about the metaphysical import of perception while sharing premises about its character. As far as Kant is concerned, I will suggest that there may be less difference between his account and Schopenhauer's than Schopenhauer thought. Schopenhauer may have been misled by Kant's characteristically loose terminology and also by Kant's characteristic expository method to impute to Kant a conception of the independence of perception from the activity of the understanding that Kant did not actually hold. To make these points, I will first expound Schopenhauer's thesis of the intellectual character of perception, and then look more briefly at Reid's and Kant's accounts so that we can see what the differences and similarities between their views and Schopenhauer's really are.

1. Schopenhauer on Perception and Understanding

The gist of Schopenhauer's account is that to perceive something as an external object is to be aware of it as matter acting upon oneself, that to be aware of something as acting upon oneself is to conceive of it as a cause, that the concept of causality is a product of and is applied by the faculty of understanding, and thus that perception, although triggered by sensation, involves an awareness of causality that can come only from the understanding. Yet phenomenologically perception is immediate rather than

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inferential – in Schopenhauer's words, "immediate, necessary, and certain" rather than a "conclusion in abstract concepts . . . through reflection" and "arbitrary" (WWR I, 12). So the role of the understanding in perception is to supply a concept (or concepts) but not to make inferences with them: stimulated by sensation, the understanding simply applies the concept of causality, or of matter as a causal agency, rather than judging from some intermediate premise and as so to speak a further act of thought that a sensation of which one is aware of as such must be caused by some external agency. Finally, Schopenhauer also holds that as a contribution of the understanding, the concept of causality that is essential to perception is valid for the subject and indispensable to its representation of the world but not valid of reality independently of the subject, so that the very fact that the concept of causality is indispensable to perception implies that perception gives us the world as it appears, not the world as it is in itself. Schopenhauer takes his discovery that the concept of causality is essential to perception as the foundation of his version of idealism, like Kant's a version of idealism that asserts that the world of spatio-temporal, causally efficacious matter that we ordinarily take ourselves to perceive or experience is only the appearance of some ground the nature of which is not revealed by that appearance but can be at least to some extent determined through the will – although in Schopenhauer's case, through our immediate experience of irrational and amoral will in ourselves rather than, as in Kant's case, through our inference to a rational and moral will in ourselves from our awareness of our moral obligation.

Schopenhauer states the core of his view in §§ 4–5 of the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation* and amplifies it in the revised edition of his doctoral dissertation *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, originally published in 1813, before *WWR*, but then expanded in 1847, after the second edition of the *magnum opus*. In § 4, Schopenhauer states the general theses that our conception of matter, the object of perception, is the conception of a causal agency and that the conception of causal agency is due to the understanding, and also suggests some specific reasons why the perception of external objects must involve the conception of causality; the latter argument is amplified in *FR*. In § 5, Schopenhauer argues that the presence of the concept of causality and thus the involvement of the understanding in perception implies the ideality rather than the reality of the spatio-temporally extended, causally active world of the objects of perception. Let us consider those two main phases of Schopenhauer's argument separately.

In §§ 2 and 3 of *WWR*, Schopenhauer had argued that the objects of perception are arrayed in space and time; in the language of *FR,* this means that the principle of sufficient reason of "being" is space and time. In § 4, he argues that the object of perception is matter, and that matter is equivalent to causality, a concept of the understanding; the corresponding thesis in *FR* is that causality is the principle of sufficient reason of "becoming." Having asserted that our experience of succession "is the whole essence and nature of time" and that our representation of juxtaposition in the array of "purely perceived space" has "exhausted the whole nature of space," Schopenhauer states the equivalence of matter and causality thus:

> He who has recognized that form of the principle of sufficient reason which governs the content of those forms (of time and space), their perceptibility, i.e., matter, and hence the

> law of causality, has thereby recognized the entire essence and nature of matter as such; for matter is absolutely nothing but causality, as anyone sees the moment he reflects on it. Thus its being is its acting; it is not possible to conceive for it any other being. Only as something acting does it fill space and time; its action on the immediate object (which is itself matter) conditions the perception in which alone it exists. The consequence of the action of every material object on another is known only in so far as the latter now acts on the immediate object in a way different from that in which it acted previously; it consists in this alone. Thus cause and effect are the whole essence and nature of matter; its being is its acting . . . The substance of everything material is therefore appropriately called in German *Wirklichkeit*, a word much more expressive than *Realität*
>
> (WWR I, 8–9),

because it connotes efficacity or effectiveness rather than merely the logical status of being the object of an affirmation (as the category of *Realität* does for Kant) (see CPR, A 70/B 95 and A 80/B 106). Schopenhauer seems in the first instance to be talking about the perception of multiple external objects in relation to each other, and to be arguing that we perceive external objects to be in relation to each other in time and space by perceiving them to be acting on each other, or at least one of them to be acting on the other. But he subsequently makes it clear that he means to be talking about all perception of external objects, and to be arguing that any perception of an external object is actually an awareness of it as acting upon our own body through sensation: perception is in the first instance awareness of "the action or affect" of an object upon "animal bodies," specifically upon *one's own* animal body, and "To this extent these bodies are the *immediate objects* of the subject; through them the perception of all other objects is brought about" (WWR I, 11). Schopenhauer holds that such awareness of the effect of another body on one's own is phenomenologically immediate even though it involves a conception of the activity of the other body and is thus the product of the faculty of understanding, and is not reducible to awareness of the sensation by the external object. Thus, he continues the passage just quoted by saying that

> The changes experienced by every animal body are immediately known, that is to say, felt; and as this effect is referred at once to its cause, there arises the perception of the latter as an *object*. This relation is no conclusion in abstract concepts, it does not happen through reflection, it is not arbitrary, but is immediate, necessary, and certain.
>
> (WWR I, 11–12)

Yet this immediate knowledge of causality must involve the understanding:

> The subjective correlate of matter or of causality, for the two are one and the same, is the *understanding*, and it is nothing more than this. To know causality is the sole function of the understanding, its only power, and it is a great power embracing much, manifold in its application, and yet unmistakable in its identity throughout all its manifestations. . . . The first, simplest, ever present manifestation of understanding is perception of the actual world. This is in every way knowledge of the cause from the effect, and therefore all perception is intellectual.
>
> (WWR I, 11)

Because perception is an immediate awareness of the effect of an external object on one's own body, but as the awareness of an effect it includes awareness of the understanding's concept of causality, "All *perception* is not only of the senses, but of the intellect; in other words, *pure knowledge through the understanding of the cause from the effect*" (WWR I, 13). The phenomenologically salient characteristic of perception is its immediacy, but that is compatible with the direct involvement of our faculty of understanding as well as sensibility in perception.

In the sentence that I elided in the last extract, Schopenhauer anticipates the claim of the next section that the involvement of the understanding in our perception of the external world implies the ideality or subjectivity of the external world: "Conversely, all causality, hence all matter, and consequently the whole of reality, is only for the understanding, through the understanding, of the understanding" (WWR I, 11). We will come back to that in a moment. But first, let us consider the specific rather than general reasons why Schopenhauer believes that perception always involves awareness of causality. The general reason is simply that to be aware of matter at all is to be aware of something as acting upon oneself. But Schopenhauer also draws upon the great seventeenth- and eighteenth-century debate about perception carried on by such figures as Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Diderot, and Herder to support his position. (He explicitly mentions Locke (FR, 118) and Diderot (FR, 84), as well as citing more recent textbooks on optics.) In § 4 of *The World as Will and Representation*, he refers only briefly to visual phenomena that cannot be explained by the supposed character of our sensations alone, but that must involve some further intellectual processing of sensation: "how by comparing the impressions received by the different senses from the same object the child learns perception; how this alone throws light on so many phenomena of the senses, on single vision with two eyes, or double vision in the case of squinting, or in the case where we look simultaneously at objects that lie behind one another at unequal distances, and on every illusion produced by a sudden alteration in the organs of sense" (WWR I, 12). In all these cases, Schopenhauer holds, the content of our perception is not mere sensation but the belief that our sensations are being caused in a certain way by a certain sort of object – our different visual and tactile sensations by the different effects of the same cause on different organs of our own body, our two different visual sensations (unconscious in the case of single vision, conscious in the case of double vision) by the effects of one and the same object on our two different eyes (in different circumstances) and so on – but that we apply the relevant causal concepts so immediately that it still makes sense to think of our awareness as perceptual rather than judgmental. But Schopenhauer also says (in the third edition of *WWR*) that he has "treated this subject much more fully and thoroughly in the second edition" of *FR* (§ 21), so let us follow his advice and look there for a fuller treatment of his examples.

Schopenhauer begins the central § 21 of *FR* with the colorful statement that

> One must be forsaken by all the gods to imagine that the world of intuitive perception outside . . . had an entirely real and objective existence without our participation, but then found its way into our heads through mere sensation, where it now had a second existence like the one outside.
>
> (FR, 76)

Instead, he claims,

> the senses furnish nothing but the raw material, and this the understanding first of all works up into the objective grasp and apprehension of a corporeal world governed by laws, and does so by means of the simple forms . . . space, time, and causality. Accordingly, our daily *empirical intuitive perception is intellectual.*
>
> (FR, 78; emphasis in the original)

As in *WWR*, however, he stresses that "This operation of the understanding . . . is not discursive or reflective, nor does it take place *in abstracto* by means of concepts or words; on the contrary, it is intuitive and quite immediate" (FR, 78). Schopenhauer next maintains that only touch and sight "are of use to objective intuitive perception": the other three senses, that is, hearing, smell, and taste, can "serve to announce to us the presence of objects already known to us in another way," but cannot by themselves suffice, even with the intervention of the understanding, to represent objects distinct from our sensations of them. "A blind man can hear music all his life without obtaining the slightest objective representation of the musicians, the instruments, or the vibrations of the air" (FR, 79). (Over a century later, P.F. Strawson (1959) would contest the claim that the representation of an objective world could not be constructed on the basis of auditory data alone, although he does not name Schopenhauer as a target of his argument.) Schopenhauer's reason for this claim is that the three senses other than touch and sight do not present their information in spatial form, while touch and sight do. (Strawson contested such a claim about hearing precisely by arguing that it might after all be able to offer a space-like matrix adequate for the reidentification of "objective" sounds). Schopenhauer's argument for the role of the understanding in "objective intuitive perception," or in the perception of external objects, however, is based on the premise that even the spatial characteristics of those sensations that do have them must be supplemented by causal connections in order to represent external objects. First, he makes the argument about touch: "If I press against a table with my hand," I may get the idea of a plane of a certain size, perhaps extending from the heel of my palm to the tip of my middle finger in one direction and from the tip of my thumb to the tip of my little finger in the other direction, but "the sensation I get certainly does not contain the representation of the firm cohesion of the parts of that mass," that is, of the table as a solid, three-dimensional object. "It is only when my understanding passes from the sensation to the cause thereof that it constructs for itself a body having the properties of solidity, impenetrability, and hardness" (FR, 81). My perception of the table is actually the idea of an object causing my sensation through such properties as solidity, impenetrability and hardness (which, remember, must themselves be analyzable into sheer activity). Or when the same parts of my hand feel (e.g., in the dark) a flat surface or the surface of a sphere, it is my understanding, which, "from the different position, assumed by my hand in the one case or other," "construct[s] the shape of the body, contact with which is the cause of the sensation" and it – the understanding, by its own activity – "confirms this sensation for itself by varying the points of contact" (FR, 81–82). The perception of the plane or the ball is not a mere sensation, but an interpretation of the cause of the sensation, although one that is so phenomenologically immediate that Schopenhauer insists it should still be called an intuition rather than a reflection or a judgment.

Having dealt with the case of touch, Schopenhauer then embarks on a detailed discussion of a variety of visual phenomena, all meant to make the same point. His claim is that vision of external world of three-dimensional objects can be produced from mere sensation, "such limited material as brightness, darkness and colour" only by the understanding, "through its simple function of referring the effect to the cause and with the aid of the intuitive form of space given to it," thereby yielding "the visible world that is inexhaustibly rich in its many different forms" (FR, 85). He claims that it is the understanding that "set[s] right the impression of the object which appears reversed and upside down on the retina" to yield the perception of the object rightside up and with the proper lateral orientation (FR, 86); that it is the understanding that converts "the sensation into intuitive perception" by making "one single perception out of a doubly experienced sensation" through its knowledge that one object will cause two different sensations if it is too close to the eyes for the light rays emanating from it to be focussed on the same part of the retina in each eye (FR, 87–92); that it is the understanding that adds the recognition of the third dimension, the depth, to the two-dimensional sensations of objects offered by the eye alone, through its knowledge of the causation of such two-dimensional sensations, although once again "this operation of the understanding, like those others, is carried out so directly and rapidly that we are conscious of nothing but the result" (FR, 84); and finally that it is the understanding that computes the distance of objects through its knowledge of the causal relation between the "*optical angle* of the two axes of the eyes" and the distance of objects from the eyes (FR, 99), by its knowledge of the causal relation between the "*atmospheric perspective*" of our sensations and our distance from their objects (FR, 100), and/or by its knowledge of the effects of distance on our sensation of the size of objects (FR, 101). Indeed, in all of these cases, Schopenhauer's claim is that the understanding is computing distance on the basis not just of the general concept of causality but on the basis of particular causal laws, although this computation happens so fast that from a phenomenological point of view it seems to yield an intuition rather than a judgment.

Schopenhauer seems to be using these examples to prove the opposite of what most philosophers over the previous century had taken them to prove. Beginning with Locke's discussion in the second edition of his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* of the problem suggested to him by William Molyneux, namely whether a previously blind adult who had known how to distinguish two different shapes, for example a sphere and a cube, only by touch would immediately know which was which if suddenly enabled to see (cf. Locke 1975, Book II, chapter IX, § 8, 145–56), most philosophers had agreed that the correlations between visual appearance and tactile and kinaesthetic cues of the kind involved in the Molyneux case and the other sorts of examples considered by Schopenhauer would have to be learned, thus are not immediate. Berkeley's *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* of 1709 is an extended argument, from many examples, for this conclusion. Yet at the same time, none of the philosophers who had taken this position, neither Locke nor Berkeley early in the discussion nor Diderot or others later, had explicitly claimed a special role for the *understanding* in this learning process; they had all argued as if we simply learn how to correlate the deliverances of the several *senses*, aided no doubt by memory. Schopenhauer, however, concludes from these examples that the perception of an external object – for example, the single cube that both looks and feels a certain way – is an immediate inference of

the understanding rather than a learned correlation of the senses supplemented by nothing more than memory. Why does he think this?

Clearly, in spite of his insistence that perception is immediate rather than inferential, Schopenhauer believes that the content of a perception is actually a judgment that my present sensation is caused by a certain sort of object: that my present cube-looking visual condition is being caused by the same object that gave me a cube-feeling tactile stimulation a moment ago, that the hazy appearance of a tower in the distance is being caused by the same object that would cause me to have a clear view of a tower if I were to walk closer to it, and so on. In perception, I do not just correlate one sort of experience with another, but rather associate various experiences as effects of a common cause. To do that, obviously, I need to have the concept of a cause, and Schopenhauer, following Kant, holds that concept to be supplied by the understanding rather than somehow acquired from sensory experience alone. So for that reason Schopenhauer concludes from the previous discussion that perception actually involves associations among different sensory experiences that it must involve the understanding.

That much is clear. After that, Schopenhauer's position becomes somewhat more obscure. One could concede that the concept of causality must be supplied by the understanding and yet still maintain that particular causal connections must always be learned from experience – Kant himself at least sometimes suggests that (CPR, A 127 and B 165) – and could therefore maintain that particular causal laws must therefore be learned rather than innate, thus that perception, equated with the interpretation of the causal import of particular sensations, must also be learned rather than innate. In that case, the "immediacy" of perception on which Schopenhauer insists would amount to nothing more than the fact that after we have matured and learned our way around the world a bit, whether as infants or as adults who have suddenly been granted previously unavailable sensory inputs, we have simply learned to make certain causal connections so quickly that we no longer notice that we are actually making them. And if Schopenhauer thinks otherwise, then, as D.W. Hamlyn (1980, 19–20) has argued, he must be committing himself to the view that we have not merely an innate concept of causality but innate knowledge of particular causal laws, which is assumed to be a very implausible view. A close reading of Schopenhauer's text may suggest that this is indeed what he intends. For example, in one passage already quoted he says that "the senses furnish nothing but the raw material, and this the understanding first of all works up into the objective grasp and apprehension of a corporeal world governed by laws, and does so by means of the simple forms already stated, namely space, time, and causality" (FR, 78), and this could suggest that he thinks that the understanding has innate possession not only of the "simple form" of causality but also of particular causal laws. In discussing the Molyneux case, he says that the understanding even of the man who still has only touch and has not yet regained sight "infers immediately and intuitively" a cause for the resistance and edges that he feels "and through that inference the cause now presents itself as a solid body" (FR, 82). This makes it sound as if the man has innate knowledge of the particular kind of cause that produces the effects that he feels. In yet another passage, explaining how we know that the inverted image on the retina represents an upright object, Schopenhauer states that "the understanding steps in at once with its causal law, refers the experienced effect to its cause, and, as from the sensation it has the

datum of the direction in which the ray of light impinged on the retina, it pursues this backwards to the cause on both lines" (FR, 86). This makes it sound as if the understanding has innate knowledge of the causal laws governing light rays and lenses, and uses this causal law for a (no doubt very rapid) inference to the cause of the particular image on the retina. Such passages do seem to commit Schopenhauer to the view that we have innate knowledge of particular causal laws, as well as to the assumption that we are actually at least to some degree conscious of things like images on our retinas as the effects to the causes of which we infer.

The last assumption seems deeply problematic, although the implication that we are explicitly conscious of something like a retinal image as an effect to the cause of which we subsequently infer may be precisely what Schopenhauer is trying to avoid by maintaining that perception is immediate rather than inferential: perhaps his view is that for perception to take place there must be mental processing of sensations involving the concept of causality and even particular causal laws, but that we are not ordinarily conscious of the sensations which are being treated as effects, only of the objects being inferred as their causes. Be that as it may, we ought at least to wonder whether the first assumption, namely that we have innate knowledge of particular causal laws, is as implausible as it is ordinarily assumed to be. Current evolutionary thought allows the possibility that norms of cooperation learned in some early stage of mammalian or primate evolution may become represented and passed down to posterity by genetic pathways; if that is so, it might also be possible for particular causal laws that have been learned by creatures somewhere along the evolutionary line also to be passed down to later generations by genetic pathways, and thus to be innate for later individuals or species even though they had to be learned at some earlier stage of evolution. In that case, the idea that we know particular causal laws necessary for perception innately might not be utterly implausible.

In any case, Schopenhauer is at the very least convinced that the understanding must supply the concept of causality for perception to take place, and he then uses that as a premise for his argument for idealism with respect to the perceived world, that is, for his view that the perceived world is itself representation rather than something that exists as it is perceived to be independently of being perceived. He makes this argument in § 5 of *WWR*. His thesis is that "all causality is only in the understanding and for the understanding," so "The entire actual, i.e., active, world is therefore always conditioned as such by the understanding, and without this is nothing" (WWR I, 15). This assertion comes in the midst of a larger argument in which he distinguishes his position from both skepticism, for which he designates no protagonist, and dogmatism, which can come either in a realist version, for which again no protagonist is named, or an idealist version, which he charges to Fichte. Skepticism simply leaves open whether perception veridically represents a world of objects outside of the perceiver and beyond the perceiver's perception, realist dogmatism asserts that it does, and idealist dogmatism denies that there is any object other than the perceiver and its perceptions, thus any room for skepticism: "The idealism of Fichte makes the object the effect of the subject" (WWR I, 13). Schopenhauer's own position is that "object and subject precede all knowledge, and hence even the principle of sufficient reason in general, as its first condition" (WWR I, 14), so that there are both subjects and objects beyond the domain of perception which together constitute that domain. Both subject and object turn out to be

known in some sense through our experience of will (Book II) rather than through the principle of sufficient reason. But the principle of sufficient reason is the key to knowledge of the domain of perception that is constituted by the relation between the real subject and object. Schopenhauer distinguishes his position from the dogmatic idealism of Fichte because he is convinced, like Kant, that he has given no argument against the ultimate reality of the object that exists independently of the subject, and like Kant he even thinks we can know something about the in-itself through the will, although through our experience of our own irrational and amoral will rather than through an inference from our obligation under the moral law to a rational and moral will as our own in-itself. Schopenhauer distinguishes his position from dogmatic realism because his view of what the in-itself is like implies that our representation of the world in perception does not present the objects of that world as they are in themselves, but only as they appear in interaction with our subject, an interaction governed by the forms of the principle of sufficient reason. Most interestingly, Schopenhauer distinguishes his position from skepticism because he thinks that within the realm of perception the nature of the objects of perception – perhaps we should write "objects-of-perception" to distinguish these objects from the objects-in-themselves that interact with our subject-in-itself – are exhausted by their causal action on us, represented with the understanding's concept of causality. The "true *being* of objects of perception is their *action*" and

> Therefore knowledge of the nature of the effect of a perceived object exhausts the object itself insofar as it is object, i.e., representation, as beyond this there is nothing left in it for knowledge. To this extent, therefore, the perceived world in space and time, proclaiming itself as nothing but causality, is perfectly real, and is absolutely what it appears to be; it appears wholly and without reserve as representation, hanging together according to the law of causality.
>
> (WWR I, 14–15)

This refutes skepticism about objects-of-perception, Schopenhauer supposes (assuming he has by rejecting Fichtean idealism already rejected skepticism about the in-itself), because we can have complete causal knowledge about such objects, and can thereby know everything about them that there is to be known – there is no residue of substance, real essence, or anything of the sort that is part of the domain of perception but yet cannot be adequately known.

Schopenhauer does not supply any argument for his confidence that we can have complete causal knowledge of the domain of perception, a position that Kant never held. More worrisome, he does not actually supply an argument for his assumption that "all causality is only in the understanding and for the understanding," and thus for his inference that the world as it is represented through the concept of causation (as well as particular causal laws) can give us knowledge only of the world of representation constituted by the interaction between subject and object as they are in themselves, not knowledge of that relation as it is in itself (which therefore cannot be considered a literally causal relation) nor knowledge of the object pole of that relation. He seems to take the validity of the concept of causation as well as of the particular causal laws that we know (whether *a priori* or *a posteriori*) only for the realm of representations for granted,

or to take it over without further argument from Kant. Kant did supply his own arguments for it, beginning with the arguments of the "Transcendental Aesthetic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* for the transcendental ideality of space and time, although these arguments imply that our use of the concept of causality – and, for Kant, other categories of the understanding, for which Schopenhauer sees no need – yields a transcendentally ideal result primarily because of the transcendental ideality of the data to which they are implied, not primarily because of something about the concept of causality itself. Thus Schopenhauer provides elaborate argumentation for the involvement of the understanding, its general concept of causality, and perhaps even *a priori* knowledge of particular causal laws, in perception, but does not seem to provide his own argument that this involvement of the concept of causality in our representation of the world of perception proves the transcendental ideality of that representation or represented world.[2]

Schopenhauer thus explains the involvement of the understanding in perception without proving that this entails the transcendental ideality of the world as representation, or the world of perception. This fact explains how another philosopher could place equal emphasis on the role of the understanding in perception while arguing for a form of realism rather than idealism. That philosopher is Thomas Reid. Let us now take a brief look at Reid's theory of perception and his inclusion of it in a realist rather than idealist philosophy.

2. Reid on Perception and Understanding

Schopenhauer praises Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind* (1764) in one of the addenda in the second volume of *WWR*. He says that Reid "affords us a very thorough conviction of the inadequacy of the *senses* for producing the objective perception of things," that he "refutes Locke's teaching that perception is a product of the *senses* . . . by a thorough and acute demonstration that the collective sensations of the senses do not bear the least resemblance to the world known through perception," and that,

> although wholly unacquainted with Kant, he furnishes . . . a thorough proof of the intellectual nature of perception (which I was really the first to expound in consequence of the Kantian doctrine), and of the *a priori* source, discovered by Kant, of the constitutive elements of perception, namely space, time, and causality.
>
> (WWR II, 20–21)

Schopenhauer does not add, however, that from a theory of perception that is indeed similar to his own Reid did not infer the transcendental ideality of the world as perceived, but instead accompanied his theory with a confident realism, that is, with the view that perception does indeed inform us reliably about the nature of objects that are perceived by us but nevertheless exist independently of us, although it does not inform us about their nature through resemblances between our sensations and the objects of perception. We will consider that difference in the present section. In the final section of this chapter, we will consider the justice of Schopenhauer's claim that it was he, and therefore not Kant himself, who first drew the inference of the intellectual nature of perception from Kantian premises.

Reid distinguishes between sensation as the effect of an external object on our sensory organs, and through them on our sentience, and perception as our conception of the body that causes the sensation and our conviction of its existence, a conception and conviction that are stimulated by the sensation but that typically occur with such rapidity that we are very rarely if at all conscious of the sensation itself. The difference between sensation and perception can be brought out by reflection upon the difference between the thought "I feel a pain" and "I see a tree," the first the report of a sensation and the second the report of a perception:

> the grammatical analysis of both expressions is the same . . . But if we attend to the things signified by these expressions, we shall find, that in the first, the distinction between the act and the object is not real but grammatical; in the second, the distinction is not only grammatical but real.
>
> (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, sec. XX, 206)

Sensation "appears to be something which can have no existence but in a sentient mind, no distinction from the act of mind by which it is felt," whereas "Perception . . . hath always an object distinct from the act by which it is perceived; an object which may exist whether it be perceived or not," in other words, an object that is not just one of our own representations. More fully, "the perception of an object implies both a conception of its form, and a belief of its present existence."[3] In this regard, Reid certainly agrees with Schopenhauer that perception is "intellectual," or involves concepts and beliefs, in a way that sensation is not. He also evidently agrees with Schopenhauer when he continues that although perception does involve conception and belief, "this belief is not the effect of argumentation and reasoning," but is rather "the immediate effect of my constitution" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § XX, 206–207).

To understand Reid's position, however, we should note that Reid does not reject Locke's picture of perception *in toto*, but rather extends his quite correct interpretation of Locke's position on secondary qualities such as color to primary qualities. Locke was often interpreted, for example by Berkeley, as holding that secondary qualities are entirely subjective, not qualities of external objects at all, but as Reid recognizes that is not what Locke held. Rather, he held that Locke correctly analyzed colors as powers of bodies to produce sensations that do not resemble the powers that cause them, causes that at least in their details are unknown to us and of which "we can form no distinct conception . . . but by [their] relation to the known effect" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § IV, 101), "a permanent quality of body . . . indeed known only by its effects" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § V, 102). Locke's only mistake was not realizing that this analysis applies to many other qualities of body, such as those indicated by such words as "*astringent, narcotic, epispastic, caustic*, and innumerable others," but even to what Locke regarded as the primary qualities themselves: in Reid's view, even such qualities as shape and size are not known to us through sensations that resemble them, but are known to us by sensations that instead lead us to form certain conceptions of the nature of external bodies and convictions of their existence. Thus Locke has "the merit of distinguishing more accurately than those who went before [him], between the sensation in the mind, and that constitution or quality of bodies which gives occasion to the sensation," and has "shown clearly, that these two things are not only distinct, but

altogether unlike" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § V, 104); his only failing was not to recognize that, as can be shown by many experiments – much the same experiments to which Schopenhauer would appeal in *FR* – the situation is exactly the same with "extension, figure, solidity, motion, hardness, [and] roughness" as it is with "colour, heat and cold, sound, taste, and smell": when we have "examined, with great attention, the various sensations we have by means of [all] five senses," we realize that we "are not able to find among them all, one single image of body, or of any of its qualities" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § VI, 107). That is, our conception of and conviction in the existence of the objects of perception is not based on any resemblance between our sensations of those objects and their properties.

Rather than resembling external objects and their properties, according to Reid, sensations function as signs of them, indeed as *natural* signs (Reid 1970, Chapter V, § II, 61; § III, 65) – and natural signs are linked to what they signify not by conventions but by causal connections, as smoke is linked to and thereby a sign of fire. Reid's claim is thus that our conception of the nature and conviction of the existence of external objects is not based on resemblance between our sensations and their objects but on causal connections between them and their objects. However, like Schopenhauer, he also supposes that perception is immediate, more precisely that our conception of and conviction of the existence of external objects is immediate, not inferred by any process of demonstrative reasoning or inference from some premise describing our sensation to some conclusion about its cause. Although the connection between sign and signified, that is, sensation and object, is causal, "We pass from the sign to the thing signified with ease, and by natural impulse" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § VIII, 121): the sensation simply triggers a conception of its cause and a conviction in its existence, but not an inference from a proposition about the sensation to a proposition about its cause. "Thus our perception of objects is the result of a train of operations; some of which affect the body only, others affect the mind" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § XXI, 214), the latter the locus of such intellectual phenomena as conceptions and convictions.

Unlike Schopenhauer, however, Reid does not infer from the immediate involvement of causal conceptions and convictions in perception that perception presents a world that is only for and in the understanding, nor does he infer from the fact that perception is immediate that its authority, that is, our justification for conviction about the beliefs that it entails, is any less than that of inferential reasoning. Inferential reasoning rests on axioms of which we are convinced by the constitution of our nature, and we are convinced of the causal beliefs inherent in perception and triggered by sensation by the same authority: "by the constitution of my nature, my belief is irresistibly carried along by my apprehension of the axioms" that are the basis for inferential reasoning, "and by the constitution of my nature, my belief is no less irresistibly carried along by my perception of the tree" (Reid 1870, Chapter VI, § XX, 208–209). Of course, perception itself can furnish premises for inferences, as when I infer from my perception of my oak trees in the spring that the squirrels will be making a mess with their acorns in the fall, and indeed "the first principles of all our reasoning about existences, are our perceptions." But "the first principles of every kind of reasoning are given us by nature, and are of equal authority with the faculty of reason, which is also the gift of nature" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § XX, 212).

Reid does not consider any argument that causality might imply merely subjective validity or transcendental ideality; on the contrary, for him the fact that it is entirely natural for us to form causal conceptions and beliefs on the basis of sensation is sufficient to demonstrate the objectivity of those conceptions and beliefs. For him, the fact that "belief in the existence of the external object which you perceive" is "from the mint of nature" and "bears her image and superscription" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § XX, 207) is sufficient to secure perception against the worries of the skeptic.[4] He does give three reasons why it would be idle to question the conviction in the reality of external objects that nature has given us: first, "it is not in my power"; second, "I would not think it prudent to throw off this belief, if it were in my power," because failing to act on the causal conceptions and beliefs that nature gives me is likely to lead to nothing but injury; and third, "I gave implicit belief to the informations of nature by my senses, for a considerable part of my life, before I had learned so much logic as to be able to start a doubt concerning them," and indeed did so without injury but on the contrary with much good fortune (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § XX, 208–209). Thus, Reid concludes, I have no ground to doubt the causal conceptions and convictions to which I am immediately prompted by my sensations, but should "instead consider this instructive belief as one of the best gifts of nature" and "thank the Author of my being who bestowed it on me, before the eyes of my reason, and still bestows it upon me to be my guide, where reason leaves me in the dark" (Reid 1970, Chapter VI, § XX, 208–209). Reid's position is thus that the causal content of perception, far from being a ground for the transcendental ideality of the world of perception, is a gift of nature and in turn of its author. We have no reason to assume that the properties of the external world resemble the properties of our sensations of them, but we are prompted by those sensations to form conceptions of the properties of the external world in which we can safely and confidently believe rather than doubting them, as does the skeptic, let alone replacing them with a radically different conception of their ultimate reality, as does Schopenhauer in his brand of transcendental idealism which allows him knowledge of the nature of the in-itself as irrational will.

Since, as I have argued, Schopenhauer himself has not actually supplied an argument that the involvement of causal conceptions in our perceptions implies their transcendental ideality, we might conclude that he has no real ground on which to resist the sophisticated realist conclusion that Reid draws from the assumptions about perception that they share. Perhaps that is why after celebrating Reid's premises, he passes over the conclusion of Reid's argument in silence.[5]

3. Kant on Understanding and Perception

Having seen that there is more distance between him and Reid than Schopenhauer lets on, we can now consider whether there is as much distance between Schopenhauer and Kant as he claims. For Schopenhauer, Kant is a Moses who had a glimpse of the truth about perception but was held back by old failings from arriving at the proper theory. He accuses Kant of thinking that the "world of perception would exist for us even if we had no understanding at all, that it comes into our head in an entirely inexplicable way; this he frequently indicates by his curious expression that perception is

given," even though he concedes that Kant also holds that "the understanding through its categories brings unity into the manifold of *perception*," that "the understanding is the originator of experience," and that "the categories determine the *perception* of the object" (WWR I, 440: "Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy"). Schopenhauer holds that even though Kant sometimes spoke as if understanding must have a constitutive role in perception, thus that its categories are immediately involved in perception, he in fact continued to believe that empirical intuition, consisting of nothing but sensation formed in accordance with the pure forms of intuition but not the pure categories of the understanding, suffices to give objects of perception to which the understanding or intellect may apply its categories but which "would be already a *representation* in fact even an *object*" without that further engagement of the understanding (WWR I, 438). Thus he happily acknowledges that Kant's conception of causality as an *a priori* category of the understanding is the source of his own theory of perception, but claims that Kant himself failed to appreciate fully that the understanding is immediately rather than only mediately involved in perception.

There is certainly some justification for Schopenhauer's criticism of Kant in Kant's ambiguous use of the word "*Perzeption*." In a well-known passage that distinguishes among kinds of "representation" (*Vorstellung*), Kant uses "*Perzeption*" (*perceptio*) as a genus-term for any "representation with consciousness," and then distinguishes the two species of "A **perception** that refers [or relates] to the subject as a modification of its state," or "a **sensation** (*sensatio*)," and an "objective perception" or a "**cognition** [that is, *Erkenntnis*] (*cognitio*)," the latter of which is in turn divided into two species, intuition and concept, the former of which "is immediately related to the object and is singular," and the latter of which "is mediate, by means of a mark that can be common to several things" (CPR, A 320 / B 376–77). Here Kant does use "*Perzeption*" in one sense to refer to sensations prior to any processing, as Schopenhauer accuses him of doing, but uses the word in another sense to refer to an objective cognition of an object, what Schopenhauer accuses him of failing to do. However, perhaps one could attempt to excuse Kant from ambiguity and rescue him from Schopenhauer's objection by pointing out that he does not use the term "*Perzeption*" that he is using here elsewhere in the *Critique*, and then arguing that the term "*Wahrnehnumg*" that he, like Schopenhauer, ordinarily uses, in fact always has the sense of "objective perception." If that were true, then one could argue that Schopenhauer has just been misled by Kant's isolated subsumption of sensation under the extraordinary term "*Perzeption*," but that by "*Wahrnehmung*" he always means objective perception and fully recognizes the role of the understanding in transforming sensation into perception. However, that defense might not get to the root of Schopenhauer's objection, because as we have seen Kant goes on to divide objective perception into intuition, which is always immediate, and concept, which is always mediate, and Schopenhauer could plausibly think that by this Kant means that (empirical) intuition (sensation formed by the pure forms of intuition) is all that is necessary to present an object of perception, and that the understanding, with all of its categories and thus the category of causation, is responsible only for some sort of further thought about the objects of perception, but not for the constitution of such objects.

In spite of that distinction, Schopenhauer's objection may still be unfair, for two reasons. First, Kant's distinction between intuition and concept is itself a conceptual

distinction or distinction of reason, not a phenomenological distinction. He explicitly says that in order to get to pure intuition, we have to "separate from the representation of a body that which the understanding thinks about it, such as substance, force, divisibility, etc., as well as that which belongs to sensation, such as impenetrability, hardness, color, etc.," until "something from this empirical intuition is still left" over, "namely extension and figure [*Gestalt*]," or more precisely their pure form (*Form*) (CPR, A 20/B 34). This suggests that empirical intuition, sensation plus form, is not consciously constituted by adding form to sensation, rather that pure form and sensation are only separated out of empirical intuition by an act of philosophical abstraction; but it equally suggests that the categories of the understanding are not consciously added to a previously given empirical intuition, rather that the conceptual and the intuitional aspects of a perceptual experience of an object constitute a phenomenological unity and are also separated from one another only by an act of philosophical abstraction. Schopenhauer seems to mistake Kant's conceptual distinction between intuition and concept for a phenomenological distinction, a claim that we are conscious first of the one and only subsequently of the other, that Kant does not make.

Second, just as Kant discusses the forms of space and time successively even though empirical intuitions of outer sense immediately present themselves as having both spatial and temporal characteristics, likewise, and not surprisingly, he expounds the contributions of the several categories of the understanding to the perceptual experience of objects sequentially without meaning to suggest that we are conscious of objects first under the categories earlier mentioned and only subsequently under the categories later mentioned. In claiming that Kant thinks that the category of causality is applied to the perception of objects but not immediately involved in that perception, Schopenhauer seems to confuse the sequence of Kant's exposition with a phenomenological sequence that Kant does not have in mind. In fact, in Kant's fourfold division of the "System of the Principles of Pure Understanding," that is, the principles that can be proven about the application of the categories once it has been recognized that the categories must be applied to objects in space and time in order to yield cognition (the claim of the "Schematism"), Kant lists and discusses the "Axioms of Intuition," the "Anticipations of Perception," the "Analogies of Experience," and the "Postulates of Empirical Thinking in General" sequentially. But he gives us no reason to think that under the rubric of the "Anticipations of Perception," in which he argues that "Appearances, as objects of perception" (here he is using "*Wahrnehmung*") must be assigned "intensive magnitude" (a magnitude that can be assigned a degree but not divided into parts) because the sensations that are a part of perception have intensive magnitude, he intends to describe all of the necessary conditions for the perception of objects and their properties. He is only describing one feature of perceptions and their objects. The ensuing "Analogies of Experience," in which Kant describes the role of the categories of substance, causation, and interaction in constituting the experience of a world of enduring, changing, and simultaneous objects, can also be considered to be describing conditions for the perception of such a world. Kant would thus be arguing that the use of the category of causality, although not only that of causality, is necessary for any experience of such a world at all.

To be sure, Kant does begin the general explanation of what he means by and intends to prove in the "Analogies of Experience" by saying that "Experience is an empirical

cognition, i.e., a cognition that determines an object through perceptions" and that "It is therefore a synthesis of perceptions, which is not itself contained in perception but contains the synthetic unity of the manifold of perception" (CPR, B 218). This does seem to imply that perception is complete before the application of the concepts of substance, causation and interaction, *a fortiori* before the application of Schopenhauer's favored category of causation, and that the experience to which these categories of the understanding are essential are some further construct. This way of talking about perception, however, is present primarily in the second-edition addition to this introduction to the "Analogies," and is not typical of the way that Kant writes when he gets down to the details of his arguments. There he rather uses "perception" as the name for the product of the synthesis produced by the understanding with its categories rather than for its raw material. So, for example, in the first "Analogy," he writes that "Alteration can . . . be perceived only in substances, and arising or perishing per se cannot be a possible perception unless it concerns merely a determination of that which persists" (CPR, A 188/B 231); in other words, he asserts that the use of the category of substance is a necessary condition for the *perception* of a change. And in the second "Analogy" he argues that in addition to the use of the category of substance the use of the category of causality is also a necessary condition for one to "perceive that appearances succeed one another, i.e., that a state of things exists at one time the opposite of which existed in the previous state" (CPR, B 233) – and this is even in an opening passage added in the second edition, showing that even there Kant can use the term "perception" to mean the experience of objects that results from the understanding's application of its concepts to empirical intuitions, not an experience of objects that precedes the involvement of the understanding.

The only conclusion to be drawn from this is that Schopenhauer may have exaggerated the distance between his theory of perception and Kant's in order to claim originality for his theory of experience and not just for his theory of the nature of the will that constitutes the in-itself. In fact, his analysis of the role of the understanding in perception is essentially the same as Kant's, and in the first stages of their theories both Schopenhauer's and Kant's analyses of the role of the understanding in perception are essentially the same as Reid's. Of course, as we saw, Schopenhauer draws a very different conclusion from his analysis than does Reid, and so does Kant. But I have already suggested an adjudication of the difference between Schopenhauer and Reid, and this is not the place for a detailed discussion of Kant's own arguments for transcendental idealism. So about that issue I will say no more here.

See also 7 The Consistency of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics; 10 Schopenhauer's *On the Will in Nature*: The Reciprocal Containment of Idealism and Realism; 13 The Artist as Subject of Pure Cognition; 24 Schopenhauer's Influence on Wittgenstein; 25 Schopenhauer's Fairy Tale about Fichte: The Origin of *The World as Will and Representation* in German Idealism.

Notes

1 All quotations from Schopenhauer are from the translations by E.F.J. Payne: *The World as Will and Representation*, Indian Hills, CO: Falcon's Wing Press, 1958 (WWR), and *The Fourfold Root*

of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1974 (FR). Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR) is cited in the translation by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, with a few alterations.

2 Douglas James McDermid does find an argument from causality to the transcendental of the perceived world in Schopenhauer, turning on the premise that the (general) law of causality is known *a priori*. He finds this argument at FR, § 21, 75ff., and WWR I, § 4, 13; see McDermid (2003, 80, n. 80). But Schopenhauer says nothing about why what we know *a priori* must be transcendentally ideal in *FR*, and in *WWR*, § 4, all he says is "the independence of the knowledge of causality from all experience, in other words, its *a priori* character, can alone be demonstrated from the dependence of all experience on it" (WWR I, 13): but this is not an argument from the *a priori* knowledge of causality to its transcendental ideality, which would need to be accompanied by an explanation of why what we know *a priori* cannot also be true of the in-itself, but a question-begging inference of the apriority of our knowledge of causality from the already assumed transcendental ideality of the world of perception.

The interpretation of the import of Kant's transcendental idealism is of course a vexed subject; for my approach, see Guyer (1987, Part V); for a radically different alternative, although one that surely does not understand Kant's transcendental idealism as Schopenhauer understood it, see Allison (2004).

3 See also Reid (1969, Essay II, Chapter XVI, 249): "Sensation, taken by itself, implies neither the conception nor belief of any external object . . . Perception implies an immediate conviction and belief of something external; something different from both the mind that perceives, and from the act of perception"; see also Reid (1969, Essay II, Chapter XVII, 295).

4 Of course, writing in 1764, Reid does not consider any threat to his realism from transcendental idealism.

5 In another recent article, Douglas McDermid also concludes that Reid and Schopenhauer agree in their analysis of the nature of perception but differ in the fact that Schopenhauer believes "that the law of causality must be an a priori principle rooted in the intellect, which imposes its forms on the data of sensation," thus leading to idealism, making it look "very much as if the knowable world is to some degree constructed by the mind and hence dependent upon it." The only difference between his account of the relationship between Schopenhauer and Reid on perception is that his goal "has not been to decide which of our two philosophers best captures the difference between sensation and perception"; see McDermid (2001, 12–13). McDermid's reluctance to adjudicate a debate between Reid and Schopenhauer about whether the causal analysis of perception implies realism or idealism is linked to his reluctance in the article previously cited to recognize that Schopenhauer has no or at best only a question-begging argument for the assumption that causality implies ideality; since I am not reluctant to recognize that, I am willing to contend at least that Schopenhauer himself has no argument against Reid's realist inference from his analysis of perception.

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3

Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics

DALE JACQUETTE

1. Logical and Mathematical Background

Schopenhauer was not a logician or mathematician in the way that other philosophers – Plato, Descartes, Leibniz, Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Rudolf Carnap, W.V.O. Quine, among many others – have been practising logicians and mathematicians. Despite the apparent limits of his mathematical training, evidencing at best only a questionable level of competence in the formal sciences, Schopenhauer develops a unique, intrinsically interesting, and in some ways remarkably defensible position in the philosophy of logic and mathematics.

Schopenhauer proceeds by invoking general epistemic principles, which he then applies to the specific case of logical demonstration and mathematical discovery and proof. Logic for Schopenhauer is syllogistic logic of the sort Immanuel Kant describes in the century just before Schopenhauer's as not having changed since the time of Aristotle. In the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant famously writes:

> That logic has already, from the earliest times, proceeded upon this sure path is evidenced by the fact that since Aristotle it has not required to retrace a single step, unless, indeed, we care to count as improvements the removal of certain needless subtleties or the clearer exposition of its recognized teaching, features which concern the elegance rather than the certainty of the science. It is remarkable also that to the present day this logic has not been able to advance a single step, and is thus to all appearance a closed and completed body of doctrine.
>
> (Kant 1965, B viii)

The only mathematics, furthermore, with which Schopenhauer has any passing familiarity, in company with Kant before him, again, is classical Euclidean geometry and relatively elementary arithmetic (see Friedman (1992); Rusnock (2004)). As in

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Kant's case also, it is possible that Schopenhauer had at least ordinary facility in trigonometry and the integral and differential calculus. Schopenhauer began his university studies as a medical student, and no doubt needed a basic familiarity with some advanced mathematics as part of his general scientific background, but there is no evidence that he had sufficient ability, for example, to undertake competent research work in theoretical physics.[1] What is interesting about Schopenhauer's philosophy of logic and mathematics is that regardless of his dubious qualifications as logician and mathematician, he manages to offer valuable highly perceptive observations about the nature and limitations of these disciplines. He does so by understanding the relevant concepts at an appropriate level of abstraction, in somewhat the same way that a philosopher might be able to provide exceptional insight into artistic practice without ever having handled a paintbrush.

2. Intuitive versus Abstract Knowledge

The possession of an intuitive grasp of mathematical truths, even on the part of nonmathematicians, is crucial to Schopenhauer's interpretation of the philosophical significance of the exact sciences. His epistemology is presented in *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, his monumental treatise, *The World as Will and Representation*, and in methodological asides sprinkled throughout his knowledge-related writings.

Schopenhauer distinguishes between intuitive and abstract knowledge. All knowledge, he believes, is ultimately perceptual or intuitive, and vision in particular has an especially important role in his philosophy. We read in Schopenhauer's 1816 essay *On Vision and Colors*: "All intuitive perception is intellectual, for without the *understanding* we could never achieve intuitive perception, observation [*Wahrnehmung*], the apprehension of *objects*" (VC, 10). Although Schopenhauer regards the capacity for abstract knowledge as a distinctive trait of human cognition, he considers intuitive knowledge as in every way superior to abstract theoretical knowledge. He holds that all theoretical knowledge is at bottom only abstracted from perception, in terms of which a theory of any type must ultimately be validated, and without which theoretical knowledge lacks a legitimating foundation. He distinguishes between intuitive knowledge as providing insight into the ground of being, the real explanation of things, or *ratio essendi*, whether in empirical or mathematical truths, whereas abstract knowledge, including mathematical demonstrations following the axiomatic method of Euclid's *Elements* as its model, and relying largely on contradiction or *reductio ad absurdum*, merely offers *convictio*, convincing us *that* a proposition is true without offering any satisfactory insight into *why* it is true (see especially FR, 194; 204–205).[2]

The distinction between intuitive and abstract knowledge is important to Schopenhauer for a number of reasons. First, their hierarchical relationship, in which abstract knowledge is dependent on intuitive knowledge, leads Schopenhauer to describe human understanding as a continuation, extension and perfection of the sort of perceptual knowledge of facts and situations that are found even among members of the nonhuman animal kingdom. We discover a natural progression from the awareness of the world as representation among animals and its highest development in human con-

sciousness, thanks to our species' greater intellectual powers of abstraction. The fact that Schopenhauer requires philosophy to begin with perception, and hence with the world as representation, is a reflection of his commitment to the priority of intuitive over abstract knowledge, and the basis for the hierarchy of epistemic categories in his philosophy. There is logical and mathematical knowledge of the world as representation under Schopenhauer's fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason, and there is also empirical knowledge for which, as in David Hume's philosophy, perceptual experience is sovereign (WWR I, 70–73).[3]

Where logic and mathematics are concerned, Schopenhauer holds that it is only sense perception that leads to knowledge, through which all axioms and deductions of theorems are ultimately justified. Schopenhauer maintains that the rules of a logical system are not needed for correct reasoning. He argues that formal principles can actually obstruct logical inference in practice. All such rules are acceptable and accepted in practice only insofar as they agree with intuition, and would be rejected or modified if or to whatever extent they turn out to disagree with intuition, rather than the other way around. Schopenhauer thinks of abstract knowledge as at best a practical convenience for the codification, expression and communication of whatever knowledge is properly gained and justified intuitively through perception (WWR I, 76, n. 28).[4]

He introduces the primary distinction in his theory of knowledge in these terms, maintaining that: "The main difference among all our representations is that between the intuitive and the abstract" (WWR I, 6). He opposes the prevailing assumption that all knowledge is abstract or theoretical, a proposition he seeks to overturn. He accordingly classifies all knowledge as representation, but singles out abstract knowledge as just one of two basic subcategories of representations available to thought. He does not limit knowledge, or even abstract knowledge, in principle, to human beings, but cautiously observes that among the creatures with which we have acquaintance, only human knowers are capable of abstract knowledge. "The latter," he writes, "constitutes only one class of representations, namely concepts; and on earth these are the property of man alone" (WWR I, 6). Schopenhauer associates reason with abstract knowledge, limited again among representing subjects in our experience exclusively to our fellow human beings. Finally, he indicates his intention to begin by investigating the nature of intuitive representations, which he interprets perceptually in general, and more specifically and paradigmatically in terms of vision, while recognizing in principle the need to include reference to other types of perception.

Given his emphasis on intuition over abstract theoretical knowledge, it is natural that Schopenhauer should proceed in this order. He offers evidence from many different kinds of considerations, including signs and ways of thinking and speaking about intelligence and its opposite. He considers the manner in which persons including theorists at the highest reaches of abstraction react to the occasional conflicts that arise between intuitive and abstract representations as a clue to the priority of intuition over abstract theoretical knowledge (WWR I, 22). Adding more substance to his account of the concept of intelligence, Schopenhauer explains intuitive representation more fully as the perception of causal regularities. He goes so far as to identify the perception of causal interconnectedness as the essence of intelligence. It is through the perceptual grasp rather than theoretical understanding of causality that

intelligence is able among other things to design and build machines to accomplish difficult tasks.

3. Logical Intuition and Abstract Reasoning

Schopenhauer's reference to understanding (*Verstand*) and its opposition to reason (*Vernunft*) is significant in his theory of knowledge as representation. Understanding is the fruit of intuitive representation or perceptual grasp of states of affairs among the world's appearances, and does not require logical inference or appeal to abstract principles. This is why Schopenhauer says that "Reason can always only *know*; perception remains free from its influence, and belongs to the understanding alone" (WWR I, 25).

Logic and mathematics provide an important test case for Schopenhauer's application of the distinction between intuitive and abstract knowledge. It is a classical assumption of rationalist philosophers, such as Plato and Descartes, that in justifying knowledge reason and logical inference ought to have precedence over empirical observations. Schopenhauer challenges this concept, as does Kant, on whom Schopenhauer partly relies. Logic and mathematics as formal disciplines are often taken as archetypes of reason in its purest, most abstract form. The truths of logic and mathematics are supposed to be impeccably certain, setting a high benchmark for exactitude and certainty in all areas of knowledge. As such, logic and mathematics are often considered to belong to a very different category than the comparatively uncertain doubt-prone deliverances of empirical perceptions reflected in the natural sciences. The objection is that sensation in comparison can be vague, unreliable, subject to illusion, contingent rather than necessary, and at best less certain than the tautologies and deductively valid inferences of logic and the theorems of mathematics.

Schopenhauer, opposing any rationalist preference for pure reasoning in the formal sciences, is committed to the priority of intuitive over abstract representation, of perceptual over theoretical knowledge, and of the understanding over reason. Accordingly, he relegates logic and mathematics to subjects of secondary importance in the epistemic hierarchy. He interprets them as products of rational theory whose principles can only be discovered and justified by intuitive representation, and whose rules are subject to revision or rejection to whatever extent they come into conflict with perception and intuitive knowledge gained by sense perception. Schopenhauer draws a number of instructive analogies between logic and philosophy and other supposedly foundational subdisciplines with respect to their theoretical superstructures. He argues, more remarkably, that logic, mathematics, and abstract theory generally, are never of any practical use, but are at most convenient ways of codifying the relevant general principles of empirically grounded intuitive knowledge of any aspect of the world as representation (WWR I, 44–46).

The fact, if true, that logic in and of itself has no practical worth, reinforces Schopenhauer's position that reason takes a second seat to perception. Intuitive representation in that case has epistemic as well as anthropological priority over all types of abstract representation and theoretical knowledge. If these assertions hold good for logic and mathematics, how much more should they not also do so for any other branch of abstract inquiry? Schopenhauer begins by asking about the utility of logical

rules. He argues, surprisingly and disarmingly, that the rules of logical inference are of no use whatsoever in reasoning, because no one, he claims, including professional logicians, actually consults them in drawing logical inferences. Logicians and mathematicians are prepared in principle to reject whatever rules are currently in place if they contradict what intuitive representation in a particular case reveals as a correct or incorrect deduction. The rules are always expendable in light of recalcitrant intuitive knowledge, if Schopenhauer is right, in terms of which the only principles that might be offered are justified in the first instance as abstractions from particular episodes of reasoning that the subject recognizes as intuitively correct without reference to theory.

Appealing to the distinction between theory and practice, Schopenhauer concludes that the rules of logic can at most have theoretical interest. "[I]t is not necessary to load the memory with these rules," he writes, "for logic can never be of practical use, but only of theoretical interest for philosophy" (WWR I, 44–45). He compares the role of logic in philosophy to that of other supposed theoretical foundations to practical activities. He makes the same point with respect to the irrelevance of abstract harmony and music theory for the appreciation of music, for theoretical ethics in moral conduct, and theoretical aesthetics in the production of artworks. "For although it might be said that logic is related to rational thinking as thorough-bass is to music," he continues,

> and also as ethics is to virtue, if we take it less precisely, or as aesthetics is to art, it must be borne in mind that no one ever became an artist by studying aesthetics, that a noble character was never formed by a study of ethics, that men composed correctly and beautifully long before Rameau, and that we do not need to be masters of thorough-bass in order to detect discords.
>
> (WWR I, 45)

He concludes that whereas theoretical knowledge in each of these areas can be useful in communicating the results of intuitive knowledge, it plays no part whatsoever in the successful practice of music, ethics, art or, finally, logic or mathematics.

It is hard to dispute Schopenhauer's anthropological argument, at least with respect to these analogies. Surely he is right to say that music was competently composed long before anyone sat down to formulate the rules for correct composition, that persons were morally good before the advent of moral philosophy, just as painting and sculpture preceded efforts to lay down rules for their practice. It might even be said, once rules for the arts are in place, that to the extent that composers and other practitioners of the arts follow such rules mechanically and pedantically rather than pursuing their own artistic sensibility, to that extent they are likely to produce only wooden and musically less interesting work. The same is true of the relation between ethics and virtue, and aesthetics and the graphic and plastic arts. One does not become a virtuous person simply by learning a code of moral rules, nor a great artist simply by memorizing and then trying to put into practice what purport to be rules for making great art. Whether or not Schopenhauer is right about logic and mathematics also fitting this pattern may be open to dispute. He argues confidently in extreme terms, however, that logic in particular is even less useful to philosophy and as a system of rules of reasoning than moral or aesthetic rules:

> Aesthetics and ethics also, though in a much less degree, may have some use in practice, though a mainly negative one, and hence they too cannot be denied all practical value; but of logic not even this much can be conceded. It is merely knowing in the abstract what everyone knows in the concrete. Therefore we no more need to call in the aid of logical rules in order to construct a correct argument, than to do so to guard against agreeing with a false one. Even the most learned logician lays these rules altogether aside in his actual thinking.
>
> (WWR I, 45)

The difference between rules for ethics and art on the one hand, and logical rules on the other, is that the abstract knowledge codified as principles in these respective disciplines is more immediate than the practical activities themselves. Where moral and aesthetic guidelines are concerned, there is a definite substantive content that remains directly associated with, even when it is abstracted for theoretical purposes from, the respective practice. Logical rules, in sharp contrast, are as far removed as possible from the practice of actual reasoning, because logical rules, due to their purely formal and general nature, are necessarily abstracted from any specific content.

Whereas in sciences other than logic the truth of a particular case is always tested by the rule, in logic the rule must always and can only be tested by the particular case. Schopenhauer remarks that "Even the most practised logician, if he notices that in a particular case he concludes otherwise than as stated by the rule, will always look for a mistake in the rule rather than in the conclusion he actually draws" (WWR I, 46). As a result, Schopenhauer maintains that to try to make practical use of logic would be comparable to persons reading a book on mechanics in order to move their arms and legs, or studying physiology in order to induce the proper functioning of their digestive systems. If Schopenhauer is correct, then not only are logical rules not needed in order to reason properly, but they can be a definite hindrance, an encumbrance to good reasoning. This assertion, if true, casts even greater doubt on the utility of abstracting purely formal rules from the proficient exercise of reason in producing an abstract theoretical system of logical principles. Schopenhauer opposes pedantry as a mark of low intelligence in all fields, including as no exception the most abstract efforts to understand the principles of logic and mathematics.

The value of logic as a formal discipline, negligible or even detrimental to the practical conduct of reasoning, is nevertheless interpreted by Schopenhauer as having theoretical importance to philosophy in understanding the nature of reason. Logic in this sense provides an abstract theory of what inferential thinking is and how it works. We do not need the rules of logic in order to reason correctly, any more than we need music theory rules in order to properly whistle a tune. If we were unable in the absence of such rules to reason logically, then we could never arrive at such abstractions in the first place, nor could we hope to understand or correctly apply them. We can no more suspend using logic before we have a formal system of logic in place than we can forego entering the water for safety sake until we have learned to swim, for in that case we shall never learn at all. We can nevertheless theoretically understand what music is from the principles of music theory, and, Schopenhauer maintains, we can similarly better understand the nature of reasoning at a theoretical level by arriving at a correct set of logical rules (WWR I, 46).

4. Intuitive and Abstract Knowledge of Mathematics

Pursuing his motif of the relative priority of perception and intuitive representation as opposed to theory and abstract representation, Schopenhauer maintains that the conclusions of mathematics are equally perceptual in origin and ultimate justification. Kant's proto-intuitionistic philosophy of mathematics relates mathematical concepts intuitively to sense perception, and in particular to space and time as innate pure forms of intuition. Arithmetic is associated by Kant with the experience of sequential order in time, as when we count off a series of numbers successively one after another. Geometry is associated in an even more obvious way with perceptions of space and of objects in spatial relations, including the shapes and volumes of things and their distances and relations from one place to another in space.

Schopenhauer insists that some thinkers can only believe mathematical theorems when their conclusions are verified by intuition. It is only when the implications of a mathematical proof agree with what we can see and feel or otherwise experience in sensation that we can confirm that the mathematical deduction is correct (WWR I, 55). Schopenhauer does not insist that intuition is the only mode of mathematical understanding; instead, he acknowledges that some thinkers are more inclined to regard abstract mathematical demonstrations as convincing. He admits that such persons look to mathematical inferences not as the ultimate source of mathematical truth, which would be to confuse reason with understanding, but, as with all abstract theory, merely for purposes of codification, communication and application. There are different intellectual personality types, according to Schopenhauer, for which reactions to mathematical demonstration serve as a kind of litmus test as to whether they are more intuitively or more theoretically oriented. In neither case does Schopenhauer consider that there is a legitimate role for mathematical demonstrations by which they are required for the discovery or verification of mathematical truths (see White 2001, 102–38; Jacquette 2005, 50–57).

Schopenhauer regards proofs in logic and mathematics as powerless in and of themselves to establish new truths. He reduces all proof to Aristotelian syllogistic form, and he regards all syllogisms as a mode of presenting the conclusions in a chain of reasoning that receives its original inspiration and final validation only from the direct evidence of intuitive representation. A logical or mathematical truth, once discovered and established by pre-theoretical non-abstract reasoning, can always be expressed theoretically thereafter in the abstract deductive form of a syllogism. The syllogistic proof of an intuitively justified mathematical discovery then provides a compact unit for the sake of recalling, sharing and putting into practice the information it contains (WWR I, 65). The implication of Schopenhauer's treatment of logical and mathematical inferences, and of the role of intuitive representation in the most abstract sciences, is that even where knowledge seems to be most far removed from perception, it is still direct intuitive representation rather than abstract theoretical representation that is decisive in determining the truths of logic and mathematics. The moral once again is that mathematics as a systematic formal discipline by itself has no practical utility. It is the immediate intuitive grasp of mathematical relations, rather than abstract rules of an axiomatic mathematics, on which mathematical judgment is properly grounded (WWR I, 68–69).

As a final observation about the distinctive nature of mathematics, Schopenhauer reminds us that mathematical truths are *a priori* (WWR I, 76). How can this be true, however, if the ultimate justification for mathematics is intuitive representation? We are supposed to satisfy ourselves about the truth of basic mathematical theorems visually, as when we compare a Euclidean theorem with the confirmation we obtain by examining a corresponding diagram. It is when we see that what the theorem states agrees with the appropriate picture of concrete spatial geometrical relations inscribed in the imagination or on paper that we recognize its truth. If the picture or other intuitive representational evidence did not offer positive testimony in support of a mathematical proposition, then, Schopenhauer holds, we would not reject the intuition, but should instead begin seriously to question the theorem's truth.

We should recall that for Schopenhauer not all intuitive representations concern logically contingent *a posteriori* empirical relations. There can be intuitive representations for any of the four categories of explanation falling under the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason. Thus, we can as easily have intuitive representations of logical and mathematical laws as of causal and moral or motivational laws. What makes Schopenhauer an empiricist in epistemology, at least insofar as it concerns the world as representation, is the fact that he does not elevate the knowledge-conferring status of pure reason above that of intuition, but insists in every case that intuitive representations take precedence epistemically over abstract representations. Where the *a priori* rather than *a posteriori* character of mathematical laws is concerned, Schopenhauer avails himself freely of Kant's proto-intuitionist philosophy of mathematics, in which space and time as explicitly *a priori* pure forms of intuition provide a perceptual basis for the necessary truths of geometry and arithmetic.

5. *Principium Individuationis*, Physics and Idealist Metaphysics of Space and Time

There is a concurrence in Schopenhauer's transcendental idealism between the perceived world, the field of explanation in which the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason applies, and phenomenal objects and events in the world as representation distinguished from one another in space and time by the *principium individuationis*.

Schopenhauer considers the world of discrete physical objects as an objectification of Will construed as Kantian thing-in-itself. The world as representation contains many individuals, all of which are represented objects for representing subjects, separated from one another in and by differences in space and time. It is only in this way that we come to know objects and their qualities and relations under the principle of sufficient reason. Schopenhauer maintains that

> In outer as well as in inner teleology of nature, what we must think of as means and end is everywhere only *the phenomenon of the unity of the one will so far in agreement with itself*, which has broken up into space and time for our mode of cognition.
>
> (WWR I, 161)

Thing-in-itself is not literally broken up into the individuated entities experienced in perception, but objectified in the world as representation for perceiving subjects as a multiplicity of individuated perceivable things. The *principium individuationis* consequently holds only within the world as intuitive and abstract representation for representing subjects in experiencing the spatiotemporal distinctions and divisions among represented objects.

The partition of the world as representation into a plurality of distinct objects is accomplished cognitively by the subject's perceptual forms of space and time. As an implication of the Kantian Transcendental Aesthetic, a part of Kant's philosophy that Schopenhauer wholeheartedly accepts, the spatiotemporal divisions and distinctions among perceivable objects is achieved by the perceiver, or, as we might also say, by the pure forms of intuition inherent in the perceiver's mind. Like Kant, Schopenhauer need not surrender objectivity to this account of space and time as forms of intuition as the transcendental ground for the divisions among spatiotemporal entities. He can instead consider these factors as objective truths about human cognition that hold for every perceiving thinker. In particular, they are not subject to the whim or willful control of any individual perceiver. Space and time as Kantian pure forms of intuition constitute the basis for what Schopenhauer refers to as the *principium individuationis*, through whose *a priori* spatiotemporal distinctions represented objects are distinguished one from another as occurring at different times or different places in space, a plurality of things distributed in what Kant calls the sensory manifold. Schopenhauer explains:

> We know that *plurality* in general is necessarily conditioned by time and space, and only in these is conceivable, and in this respect we call them the *principium individuationis*. But we have recognized time and space as forms of the principle of sufficient reason, and in this principle all our knowledge *a priori* is expressed. As explained above, however, this *a priori* knowledge, as such, applies only to the knowableness of things, not to the things themselves, i.e., it is only our form of knowledge, not a property of the thing-in-itself. The thing-in-itself, as such, is free from all forms of knowledge, even the most universal, namely that of being object for the subject; in other words, it is something entirely different from the representation. Now if this thing-in-itself, as I believe I have sufficiently proved and made clear, is the *will*, then, considered as such and apart from its phenomenon, it lies outside time and space, and accordingly knows no plurality, and consequently is *one*.
>
> (WWR I, 127–28)

The applicability of the *principium individuationis* distinguishes the world as representation from Kantian thing-in-itself in yet another way. The spatiotemporal individuation of represented objects, made possible by space and time as pure forms of intuition in the minds of representing subjects, divides the world as representation from the thing-in-itself.

Schopenhauer notes that if the *principium individuationis* applies only and exclusively to the world as representation, then thing-in-itself is one. It further follows, as Schopenhauer later maintains, that if the thing-in-itself is Will, then the world as Will, despite its many different objectifications in the world as representation in the minds of different representing subjects, is also and for the same reason one. It might be objected that if the *principium individuationis* does not apply to thing-in-itself, but only and exclusively to the world as representation, then thing-in-itself, whether or not it is

also characterized as Will, should be neither one nor many, neither an individual nor a plurality of individuals. Schopenhauer evidently does not understand the *principium individuationis* in this way, but concludes from the inapplicability of principle to thing-in-itself that thing-in-itself, by virtue of being indivisible into many things, must therefore constitute a unity.

The proposition that thing-in-itself is one enables Schopenhauer to address a mathematical-metaphysical problem concerning the identity of the world as representation in the thoughts of many distinct representing subjects. If thing-in-itself is one, then it can be variously, which is to say, subjectively, represented in the thoughts of many different subjects. The situation philosophically is much the same from the standpoint of identity requirements and epistemic principles as what a materialist or naïve realist typically says with respect to the relation between the objectively existing mind-independent world and the multiple perceptual perspectives on the world available to a plurality of perceivers. There is no necessity, in either case, provided that, as Schopenhauer is now prepared to argue, thing-in-itself is one, to conclude on the basis of Schopenhauer's radical idealism that the world itself is a many-fragmented thing existing only within the representations of many different representing subjects. The world is one thing, the unitary Kantian thing-in-itself understood by Schopenhauer as transcendental Will, that objectifies itself for intuition in countlessly many different ways in the world as representation. It is not an *e pluribus unum*, but rather an *ex unum plures*.

6. Schopenhauer's Philosophical Geometry

Chapter VI of *The Fourfold Root* identifies a class of objects that constitute the "formal part" of complete representations that are given *a priori*. Qua formal, such objects are precisely the mathematical, arithmetical and geometrical aspects of perceivable things, concerning the extension and divisibility of the world as representation. Schopenhauer devotes considerably more attention to geometrical than to arithmetical relations, involving the specifically spatial properties of perceived objects, and deliberately ignoring the important role that arithmetic also plays in geometry through measurement, concepts of equal and proportionate length, and the reduction of geometrical values to an algebra in analytic geometry. For simplicity, we shall try as far as possible to treat geometry as a distinct type of mathematics from arithmetic, bracketing for the sake of exposition without losing sight of its arithmetical properties.

Schopenhauer accordingly begins § 39 of the *Fourfold Root* with this description of the proper subject matter and methodology of geometry:

> The whole of geometry also rests on the nexus of the position of the parts of space. It would thus be an insight into that nexus; but, as I have said, as such an insight is not possible through mere concepts, but only through intuition, every geometrical proposition would have to be reduced to this, and the proof would consist merely in our clearly bringing out the nexus whose intuition is required; more we cannot do.
>
> (FR, 198)

Schopenhauer asks which of the fundamental axioms of classical Euclidean geometry is properly intuitively grounded. He reports:

> We find, however, that the treatment of geometry is quite different. Only Euclid's twelve axioms are allowed to rest on mere intuition, and of these only the ninth, eleventh, and twelfth, properly speaking, rest on separate, different intuitions. All the others, however, rest on the view that in science we are not concerned, as in experience, with real things existing by themselves side by side and capable of infinite variety, but rather with concepts, and in mathematics with *normal intuitions*, that is, with figures and numbers, which legislate for all experience and thus combine the comprehensiveness of the concept with the complete definiteness of individual representations.
>
> (FR, 198)

The ideality of geometrical entities is attributed by Schopenhauer to yet another implication of the *principium individuationis*. He establishes an important connection in this way to Plato's conception of the geometrical Forms or Ideas. These are supposed to be distinct from one another, but within each category of which, considered as abstract, they do not admit of multiple instances. Schopenhauer states:

> Therefore what Plato says of his Ideas would hold good of these normal intuitions, even in geometry, as well as of concepts, namely that two cannot exist exactly alike because such would be only one. I say that this would hold good also of normal intuitions in geometry if it were not that, as exclusively *spatial* objects, they differ through mere juxtaposition and hence through *place*.
>
> (FR, 198–99)

Schopenhauer's distinction permits him to reconcile the abstractness of mathematical geometrical entities while at the same time allowing that they are perceivable, and hence proper objects of sensory intuition. This eccentric view of Platonic Ideas is in keeping with remarks Schopenhauer makes elsewhere about their role in the experience of aesthetic genius. There he holds that the aesthetic genius, and to a lesser extent every perceiver capable of aesthetic appreciation, passively receives the Platonic Ideas in individual or phenomenal will-suppressed moments of contemplation in which perceiving subject and the beautiful or sublime intuited object merge. Schopenhauer repeatedly insists that his understanding of the Platonic Ideas as perceivable when exemplified in nature and art is faithful to Plato's original conception of the Ideas. Few commentators have expressed sympathy or agreement with Schopenhauer's proposal that Platonic Ideas, which Plato maintains transcend the spatiotemporal world of Becoming, could possibly be perceived as occurring within or as a formal part of the physical universe. Even so, it must be said that Schopenhauer's concept of geometrical figures does not fully coincide with Plato's geometrical Ideas. The principle of individuation implies that there are multiple geometrical figures in Schopenhauer's philosophy of mathematics for each of what Plato would regard as a distinct geometrical Idea, so we do not find a one–one correspondence between what Plato and Schopenhauer respectively mean by a geometrical figure. It distinguishes only those perceivable geometrical figures of precisely the same kind and of precisely the same size. This is not true of Platonic geometrical Ideas, which have no specific size or metric dimension, but are identically exemplified, imitated or participated in by physical objects in the experiential world regardless of their size. This, indeed, is part of what makes them abstract. If we consider, for example, spatiotemporally exemplified isosceles triangles

whose congruent sides are respectively two millimeters and three meters in length, then we should recognize that for Plato these two triangles exemplify, imitate or participate in precisely the same abstract Idea of *the* isosceles triangle. Whereas, for Schopenhauer, there is no single identical geometrical figure to be definitely described as *the* isosceles triangle, but rather minimally two such isosceles triangles, one with congruent sides of two millimeters and another of three meters length; since these will evidently not be perceivably identical, or indistinguishable or indiscernible to perception.

This final consideration raises yet another potential discrepancy between Schopenhauer's perceivable geometrical figures and Plato's geometrical Forms or Ideas. Where Plato, at least as conventionally interpreted, in contrast with Aristotle's notion of inherent definitions or secondary substances, forms, as it is sometimes said, with a small "f," would maintain that the Idea of an isosceles triangle exists in the world of Being even if there are no exemplifications of the Idea in the world of Becoming, Schopenhauer is committed to holding that the only geometrical figures that actually exist as "Platonic Ideas" are those that are actually perceivable as exemplified in the world as representation. Whether this difference amounts to a further incongruity between Plato and Schopenhauer depends in turn on whether Schopenhauer is correct in arguing that he has properly understood and interpreted Plato's theory of Ideas. If Schopenhauer is right, then of course there is no discrepancy; while if the discrepancy is genuine, then Schopenhauer has seriously misunderstood Plato on the ontic status, metaphysical place of residence and existence conditions of Platonic Ideas, including abstract geometrical figures (WWR I, 129–30).[5]

7. Intuitive Reduction of Arithmetic to Counting in Time

As noted, there is a disproportionate emphasis on geometry in Schopenhauer's philosophy of mathematics. The explanation underlying Schopenhauer's preoccupation with geometry might include the fact that the perception of objects in space provides a more obvious Kantian ground for geometry than does the experience of successive moments in time for arithmetic. The difference between space and time as Kantian pure forms of intuition raises important issues in Schopenhauer's philosophy of mathematics, and helps illuminate Schopenhauer's theory by the comparison it affords between these two main divisions of elementary mathematics.

Euclid's axiomatic method of proof in particular is the frequent subject of Schopenhauer's criticism. He admires Euclid's use of *reductio ad absurdum* to establish geometrical theorems from a selection of simpler more compact propositions. Despite the power of this mode of argument, Schopenhauer maintains that any such mode of demonstration can at most produce conviction in the truth of a mathematical theorem without a further deeper understanding of why the theorem is true. It is the characteristically Schopenhauerian opposition resurfacing, between perception as the primary and only legitimate ultimate ground of explanation versus abstract rational proof offered only secondarily as a way of codifying and communicating knowledge. Schopenhauer accentuates the explanatory limitations of Euclid's style of deriving geometrical theorems:

> Instead of thus giving us a thorough insight into the nature of the triangle, [Euclid] posits a few disconnected, arbitrarily chosen propositions about the triangle, and gives a logical ground of knowledge of them through a laborious logical proof furnished in accordance with the principle of contradiction. Instead of an exhaustive knowledge of these space-relations, we therefore obtain only a few arbitrarily communicated results from them, and are in the same position as the man to whom the different effects of an ingenious machine are shown, while its inner connexion and mechanism are withheld from him. We are forced by the principle of contradiction to admit that everything demonstrated by Euclid is so, but we do not get to know *why* it is so.
>
> (WWR I, 70)

That Schopenhauer has Euclid's geometry rather than number theory in mind is clear when he adds that a mathematician "can study the whole of Euclid throughout without gaining real insight into the laws of spatial relations, but instead of these, he learns by heart only a few of their results" (WWR I, 70). The picture Schopenhauer paints nevertheless remains incomplete without a parallel treatment of the intuitive or perceptual ground of arithmetic. Here Schopenhauer's account seems less plausible, and to an extent naïve and historically uninformed, even with respect to Euclid's non-geometrical mathematics. Schopenhauer contrasts the Euclidean proof method in geometry with that of arithmetic. He considers only the most elementary finite arithmetic as it enters into counting (FR, 197). The activity of counting perceived entities is directly related to Kant's thesis of time as a pure form of intuition providing the transcendental ground of arithmetic. It constitutes the *a priori* condition for the experience of successive moments experienced in time that might be counted off as they follow one after another. Schopenhauer now remarks:

> Moreover, it is worth noting that this method of proof was applied only to geometry and not to arithmetic. In arithmetic, on the contrary, truth is really allowed to become clear through perception alone, which there consists in mere counting. As the perception of numbers is in *time alone*, and therefore cannot be represented by a sensuous schema like the geometrical figure, the suspicion that perception was only empirical, and hence subject to illusion, disappeared in arithmetic. It was only this suspicion that was able to introduce the logical method of proof into geometry. Since time has only one dimension, counting is the only arithmetical operation, to which all others can be reduced. Yet this counting is nothing but intuition or perception *a priori*, to which we do not hesitate to refer, and by which alone everything else, every calculation, every equation, is ultimately verified.
>
> (WWR I, 75)

Whereas Euclid adopts a *reductio* method of proof to establish geometrical truths beyond the intuitive truths of the chosen axioms, Schopenhauer holds that in arithmetic no such complicated techniques are required, because all of arithmetic reduces ultimately to the immediate perceptual-based abstract activity of counting. Leaving aside the doubtful assumption that all non-geometrical mathematics can be lumped together even philosophically as grounded on the most elementary arithmetical practice of counting, Schopenhauer's reduction overlooks Euclid's proof that there is no greatest prime number, which, exactly like the *Elements'* geometrical proofs, proceeds by *reductio* or "contradiction." Nor is it easy to imagine how such a proof could be "reduced" to a matter of counting, since it concerns infinite sets and series that are

sometimes said by mathematicians to be "countable" in a special technical sense, but are certainly not countable in the way Schopenhauer intends as a process of reciting whole numbers to events or objects encountered at distinct moment occurring in real time (see FR, 197).

The same is obviously true of even more sophisticated kinds of arithmetical theorems that can only be confirmed by means of complicated derivations. This is the case, for example, with respect to the argument that transcendental numbers (real or complex numbers that are not the roots of any non-zero polynomial equation) are not algebraically constructible. Schopenhauer in any case, establishing the progression of whole numbers in counting, pays insufficient heed to, if he knows anything in detail at all about, the role of functions and operations on the numbers to generate rational and irrational real numbers, imaginary, transcendental and other numbers, in elementary number theory. Against the background of his thesis of the Kantian proto-intuitionistic ground of mathematics in space and time as pure forms of intuition, and of the priority of perception over abstract reasoning in mathematics as in all disciplines, Schopenhauer now makes a remarkable admission:

> As mentioned above, our immediate perception of numbers in time does not extend to more than about ten. Beyond this an abstract concept of number, fixed by a word, must take the place of perception; thus perception is no longer actually carried out, but is only quite definitely indicated. Yet even so, through the important expedient of the order of ciphers, enabling larger numbers always to be represented by the same small ones, an intuitive or perceptive evidence of every sum or calculation is made possible, even where so much use is made of abstraction that not only the numbers, but indefinite quantities and whole operations are thought only in the abstract, and are indicated in this respect, such as $\sqrt{r^{-b}}$, so that they are no longer performed, but only symbolized.
>
> (WWR I, 75–76)

The two-level approach to understanding non-geometrical mathematical reasoning suggested by Schopenhauer anticipates a vital distinction in Edmund Husserl's 1891 treatise, *Philosophie der Arithmetik: Psychologische und logische Untersuchungen*. Following his teacher Franz Brentano, Husserl differentiates *authentic* from *inauthentic* mathematical presentations. Authentic presentations relevant to arithmetical reasoning include manageably small aggregates of things that we can take in perceptually and conceptually at a glance. They feature the most basic intuitions concerning handfuls of easily comprehended things and their augmentations, depletions and divisions into subgroups that can be held in thought without much effort. Authentic presentations of such basic collectivities and the operations that we can witness perceptually or imagine before the mind's eye provide the intuitive foundation for all of arithmetic in Husserl's early philosophy. Where authentic presentations give out at the natural limits of human cognitive abilities, there inauthentic presentations take over for the comparatively more sophisticated superstructure of advanced arithmetic involving numbers too large to comprehend except with the assistance of informative mathematical notations, axiom systems, algorithms and inference mechanisms.

Husserl's two-stage theory of arithmetical knowledge combines an intuitive basis for mathematical judgment in perception like Schopenhauer's that is consistent with plausible anthropological and developmental psychological assumptions about the origins

of caveman arithmetic (|| + ||| = |||||). At the same time, it avoids the questionable effort to account for more complicated levels of mathematics in terms of immediate sense impressions, where vision, imagination and conceptualization evidently fall short. Husserl considers the cutoff between authentic and inauthentic arithmetical presentations as belonging somewhere between 8 and 12, with 10 as the normal number of fingers offering a good compromise, precisely as Schopenhauer proposes. These items in a perceptual totality can still be grasped, considered and manipulated on a small scale in ways that are obviously related to the decimal arithmetical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. As such, small perceivable aggregates provide the intuitive basis by which Schopenhauer believes it possible to reduce all arithmetic and algebra to counting. They are enough in any case to recover the most fundamental ideas of arithmetic, after which Husserl proposes that we invent notations that support inauthentic presentations of mathematical concepts that are removed from the immediate perception of things by which we are able to work with larger numbers and more complex algebraic operations.

Schopenhauer, unlike Husserl, however, is committed to the thesis that all arithmetic and algebra reduces to elaborate forms of actual counting. He does not seem to recognize that his concession to mathematical practice working with complex algebraic equations appears greatly at odds with this central theme. He acknowledges the use of such expressions in advanced mathematics, but does not appeal to anything comparable to Husserl's notion of the perception of mathematical notations themselves as inauthentic presentations that can equally serve as a special syntactical-structural type of perceptual basis for understanding the foundations of more complicated branches and applications of mathematics. Husserl's philosophy of arithmetic in this respect represents a substantial improvement over Schopenhauer's.

Turning from, but without satisfactorily answering, the vital question of how complex algebraic applications of arithmetic can be reduced to counting perceivable objects and perceptions of acts of counting, Schopenhauer instead addresses an important topic in the epistemology of justification in his general theory of mathematical knowledge. He claims that the perceptual evidence supporting mathematics, in contrast with the *a posteriori* perceptual evidence for empirical knowledge, is *a priori*. He argues:

> As a result of all this, it is hoped there will be no doubt that the evidence of mathematics, which has become the pattern and symbol of all evidence, rests essentially not on proofs, but on immediate intuition or perception. Here, as everywhere, that is the ultimate ground and source of all truth. Yet the perception forming the basis of mathematics has a great advantage over every other perception, and hence over the empirical. Thus as it is *a priori*, and consequently independent of experience which is always given only partially and successively, everything is equally near to it, and we can start either from the reason or ground or from the consequent, as we please. Now this endows it with a complete certainty and infallibility, for in it the consequent is known from the ground or reason, and this knowledge alone has necessity.
>
> (WWR I, 76)

According to Schopenhauer, we grasp the ground of a mathematical truth intuitively or "perceptually" *a priori*. We proceed in reasoning mathematically from the ground or

general principle to the consequent, rather than in *a posteriori* empirical justification, which, on the contrary, advances from consequent to ground. Schopenhauer believes that the greater certainty of the *a priori* over the *a posteriori* path to knowledge can be understood in these terms. He declares: "My opinion is . . . *that every error is a conclusion from the consequent to the ground*, which indeed is valid when we know that the consequent can have that ground and absolutely no other; otherwise it is not" (WWR I, 79). Schopenhauer's conclusion remains doubtful, since mathematics as a human endeavor offers no guarantee of being error-free, even if the chances of making mistakes at least in elementary mathematics are fewer than in other branches of empirical knowledge. It surely remains possible, for all that Schopenhauer has to say, to proceed invalidly from the ground to the consequent, and to wrongly understand the ground, misconceiving the ground for something it is not, or grasping an entirely different ground which we take to be germane to the explanation at hand, when in fact it is explanatorily irrelevant.

See also 9 Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas.

Notes

1 Schopenhauer briefly attended medical school in Göttingen between 1809 and 1811. He also attended philosophy lectures at this time, during a particularly formative part of his life, after which he left for Berlin to pursue philosophical studies more dedicatedly. An excellent account of Schopenhauer's early years is offered by Safranski (1991).

2 See also WWR I, 69: "Now if with our conviction that perception is the first source of all evidence, that immediate or mediate reference to this alone is absolute truth, and further that the shortest way to this is always the surest, as every mediation through concepts exposes us to many deceptions; if, I say, we now turn with this conviction to *mathematics*, as it was laid down in the form of a science by Euclid, and has on the whole remained down to the present day, we cannot help finding the path followed by it strange and even perverted." Compare PP II, 21–32.

3 See e.g.: "To improve the method of mathematics, it is specially necessary to give up the prejudice that demonstrated truth has any advantage over truth known through perception or intuition, or that logical truth, resting on the principle of contradiction, has any advantage over metaphysical truth, which is immediately evident, and to which also belongs the pure intuition of space" (WWR 1, 73).

4 Here Schopenhauer similarly criticizes Spinoza's *more geometrico* in the *Ethics* as an abstract theoretical reconstruction of perceptually intuited conclusions.

5 A sustained criticism of Schopenhauer's interpretation of Platonic Ideas is offered by Janaway (1989, especially 9, 27, 277).

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4

Schopenhauer's Color Theory

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Arthur Schopenhauer was a philosopher who on several occasions arrived at the brink of some surprisingly new insight, but then missed it by a hand's breadth. As a consequence, he often got entangled in contradictions. His place in the history of philosophy is therefore one of a typical transitional figure. Take his claim to have elucidated Kant's "transcendental" approach to the problem of human knowledge. Not only did he reduce Kant's clumsy categorical schema to the sole principle of sufficient reason, but above all he insisted on the *correlation* of subject and object as the fundamental *a priori*, thus anticipating Brentano's and Husserl's notion of "intentionality." Thus, he believed to have avoided the pitfalls of subjective idealism *à la* Fichte, as well as of pre-Kantian (or, for that matter, post-Kantian, i.e., "materialist") dogmatism. However, when he opens his *magnum opus*, *The World as Will and Representation*, with the lapidary statement "The world is *my* representation" (WWR I, 3; italics added), he tends to conflate again the impersonal "transcendental" subject and the personal "psychological" subject. He felt a need to avoid the resulting danger of what he called *theoretical egoism* (what we would now call solipsism): "As a serious conviction, . . . it could be found only in a madhouse" (WWR I, 104), he said. He saw no other way than to proclaim the will (i.e., the inner aspect of my own embodied self) to be the inner core of the entire world. But in doing so he transformed his forward-looking insight into the crucial philosophical importance of our own body into just another metaphysical system.

Willy-nilly he therefore remained in the company of those German Idealists he was so given to scorning. Nor did he manage to make his metaphysical system truly consistent. His pessimist temperament as well as his ethical preoccupations prevented him from being a jubilant partisan of his World Will, the way Hegel was of his World Spirit. On the contrary, the will may be temporarily tamed, so Schopenhauer assures us, by aesthetic contemplation, and it may even be overcome in the end by ascetic saintliness.

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There is perhaps no better illustration of this general characteristic of Schopenhauer's work than his book *On Vision and Colors*. In the literature on Schopenhauer it is overlooked as a rule. It came out in 1816. A much revised and enlarged version, which is a little better known, appeared in 1847. In its second part the book presents us with a theory of colors that was meant as a defense of Goethe against Newton. He defended him in a way that, as we shall see, Goethe strongly rejected – quite rightly so, from his point of view! I shall now first outline Goethe's theory of colors, as laid down in his bulky book *Zur Farbenlehre* (*Theory of Colors*). Goethe published it in 1810, and he kept considering it as his most important work even though, to his dismay, it had generally fallen flat in the scientific world.

In his *Opticks* of 1704 Newton maintained that in what we perceive as white light (the light of the sun), certain physical realities (rays of different refrangibility) are present which have the power to provoke in us the sensation of different colors. Experiments with prisms and with the spectrum produced thereby convinced Newton of the truth of his thesis. Goethe's interest in color phenomena was aroused during his stay in Italy in 1787, when he was in regular contact with a group of German artists in Rome. Later, back in Weimar, he suddenly became convinced that Newton's main thesis is untenable. This came from his looking through a prism at a white-washed wall where, to his surprise, no color spectrum appeared. Goethe began to insist that the spectrum is produced by the image of the sun as a whole and not by an isolated ray; let alone that such a ray could be split up still further. To him Light was the Whole, infinite and indivisible; color was finite and individual. Essential to him was the polarity of Light and Darkness. Color he rather described as a *skieron*, a kind of shadow, resulting from an interaction of light and darkness.

Goethe was of course well aware that as a rule a mixture of light and darkness yields only grey. But he insisted that with the aid of a "turbid medium" (*trübes Medium*), such as vapour, dust clouds, mist, smoke or clouds, a combination of light and darkness can be effected that gives rise to the phenomenon of color. Certain liquid media, like water, or solid media, like glass, if made turbid through the admixture of some chemical substance, have the same effect. To look at darkness through a turbid medium, then, gives the sensation of *blue*. This is why mountains or the sky, when seen from afar, appear blue. To look at light which arrives through a turbid medium from a light source behind it gives the sensation of *yellow*. In the first case there is darkness behind the medium, and the only light comes from a source in front or to one side of it; therefore the light is not transmitted through the medium, but reflected by it.

From these two "polar opposites" all other colors can be derived through the intensification (*Steigerung*) of one, or through the union of two of them. Since any color is *eo ipso* darker than white, its intensification must of necessity yield a still darker one. Thus intensified yellow (the brightest of colors) gradually turns into darker, more reddish hues, which is why the sun at midday height appears as brightly yellow, but at dawn and twilight appears red due to the thicker mist. Intensified blue turns into the darkest of all colors, i.e., reddish blue (*Rotblau*), usually called violet. Since therefore, the latter contains an element of redness, too, it may be said that *both* polar opposites intensify to a more or less reddish tint; a union of the intensified forms of the primary colors finally produces the "true red," which because of its high dignity is also called "purple" by Goethe. This is important: what is normally called "red" (namely, the red

component of the spectrum) is, according to Goethe, still a somewhat yellowish red. His "purple" (or "true red") is not exactly what is usually called "purple" either, but rather what in other theories of color at the time used to be called "magenta." *Green*, on the other hand, results from a union, not of the intensified but of the original forms of the two primary colors. Note here that Goethe thought (and at least so far Schopenhauer agreed) that there are only four colors in the prismatic spectrum. Neither differentiated sharply between violet and ultramarine blue on the one hand, and between (prismatic) red and orange on the other. Also, both men claimed that green appears only when, at a greater distance from the prism, the blue (i.e., cyanide blue in contemporary terms) and yellow components overlap. "True red," or "magenta" in contemporary terms, does not appear in the spectrum at all. So Goethe's theory results in a six-color circle, here reproduced in Figure 4.1. Other than in Newton's seven-color circle (*Opticks*, Book I, Part II, Fig. 11; here reproduced in Figure 4.2), contrast colors are placed opposite to one another.

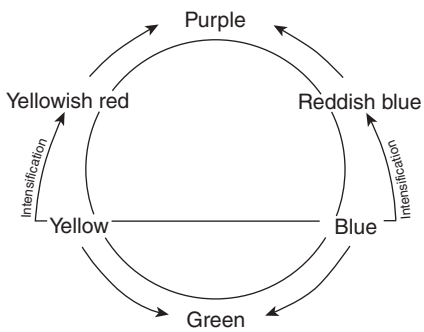


Figure 4.1. Goethe's theory results in a six-color circle

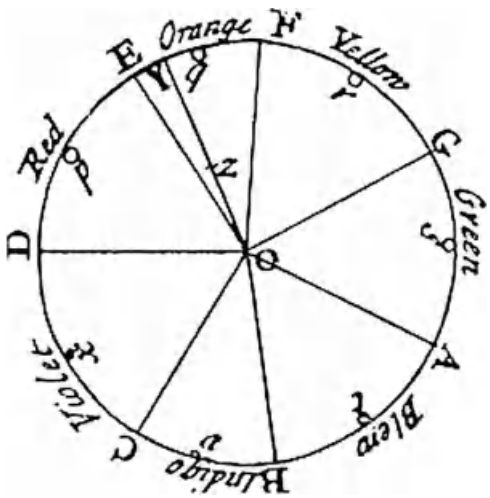


Figure 4.2. Newton's seven-color circle (*Opticks*, Book I, Part II, Fig. 11)

We must refrain here from a detailed description of the ways in which Goethe sought to demonstrate the validity of his theory for a large variety of color phenomena. He distinguished between three categories. Some, which he labeled "physiological" or "subjective," are produced by the eye itself, like colored shades or after-images. Others, the "physical" or "subjective–objective" colors, are produced by transparent, refracting media like prisms. Finally, "chemical" or "objective" colors are those which, unlike the other two, are not transient and fugitive but fixed, because they are part and parcel of a material substratum. We shall have more to say about the difficulties that arise when one tries to bring these different categories under one and the same explanatory model, whether "Newtonian" or "Goethean." Here we must observe that what Goethe found so instinctively repellent about Newton's optical work was, more than anything else, the way in which he went about his experiments. According to Goethe, in forcing light through the smallest possible opening while making his prismatic experiments, Newton put Nature on the rack so as to make her conform to a preconceived hypothesis. Not that Goethe, in contrast, just wished to stick to what common sense and immediate visual evidence suggest us. His persistent quest for what he called the *Urphänomen* ("primordial phenomenon") is sufficient proof to the contrary. This concept is central to all his scientific work. In his theory of colors he believed to have found the *Urphänomen* in the marriage of the polar opposites of Light and Darkness under the auspices of the turbid medium – an explanation which of course transcends pure experience no less than Newton's rays do. However, it is an explanation of a qualitative rather than of a quantitative kind. Whereas Goethe always spoke of pure mathematics with reverence, it is the application of mathematics to natural phenomena that leads to the abhorred "crucifying" of Nature.

But this is the very characteristic of modern science. In contrast, Goethe longed for a kind of science that appeals to the whole person, that is, not only to our analytical and abstract, but also to our intuitive and poetic propensities. The spirit of the age, he felt, still stood in the way of a breakthrough towards such a new scientific outlook – it is tempting nowadays to call it "postmodern." So much the more reason for Goethe to seek disciples to whom the legacy might be entrusted, and who might in future bring about its inevitable triumph. It so happened that in Goethe's residence, Weimar, a cultivated lady was in the habit (shared at very many other places at the time) of giving literary tea-parties in her drawing room. Here Goethe was a regular guest – of course, a supremely esteemed one. This lady, whose name was Johanna Schopenhauer, *née* Trosiener, happened to have a son, called Arthur. The two had a rather quarrelsome relationship, destined to end in a complete break. At this time he was still being admitted by his mother to her circle, albeit not too often. And of course it was precisely the august presence of Goethe that made young Arthur wish to attend her tea-parties. It so happened that he had just completed his doctoral dissertation *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. Here he defended the priority of concrete visual perception (*Anschauung*) over abstract concepts. He also attributed the dislike that otherwise sharp minds may feel for mathematics to the purely logical-deductive manner in which this science is usually presented.

All this was very much to Goethe's taste. Might this evidently gifted young man be the disciple he was in search of? He could give it a try in any case; and that is how the usually rather reserved poet invited young Schopenhauer to a more regular contact at

his own home. Alas, within no more than a few weeks of discussion and joint experimentation, Goethe felt a need to vent his annoyance over his self-opinionated disciple. And when, one year upon his departure from Weimar to Dresden, Schopenhauer put down in writing his own theory of colors and sent Goethe the manuscript with a request to give it his blessing by writing a preface for it, the latter kept aloof, so that in the end there was nothing for it but to have it printed, in the spring of 1816, without the hoped-for accolade by Goethe.

It had really been rather naïve to expect such a sanction. What can Goethe have thought of a 27-year-old, still wholly obscure philosopher who, in his covering letter, had the conceit to write that, all considered, Goethe, the surely venerated master, had only contributed important materials to the theory of colors but that he had to wait for his disciple Schopenhauer to make a real theory out of the mass, thus (in just a few weeks) putting the crown on his master's twenty-years' labour in this domain of science? Even apart from the impudence, there were some truly fundamental points of difference between the two men.

First of all, Goethe regarded the theory of color as centrally important to his entire oeuvre, equally important as, nay, more important than all his poetry. For Schopenhauer, however, his book on the subject was just a corollary to his doctoral dissertation on the "Fourfold Root." That is, it served to him as a supplement to his theory of knowledge, which in its turn was no more than a prelude, however necessary, to his real life's work, his metaphysical system. This was to appear a few years later, with the theory of knowledge being set forth in its first part, which is about the "World as Representation." A *necessary* prelude indeed – he insisted that this *magnum opus* of his could only be understood to the full by readers acquainted with his philosophical first-born.

Here is the place for a brief excursion into Schopenhauer's career as a philosopher. Our observation that his color theory was no more than a corollary to his epistemology, although not wrong, is not quite true either. It was of decisive importance for how his epistemology *developed* from the first version of the "Fourfold Root" (published in 1813, and now almost entirely forgotten) to the second, much enlarged and rewritten version (not to appear until 1847). I have demonstrated this development at great length in my book on *Schopenhauer's Broken World View* (2000), so here I confine myself to restating the main point. Central to the first branch of the fourfold root ("The principle of sufficient reason of becoming") is the author's attempt to demonstrate the *a priori* nature of the law of causality in a novel way which is better than the one given by Kant. In the first version this demonstration is still in an embryonic state; in its mature form it is found only in the second version. However, in all its essentials it is already stated in the first chapter of *On Vision and Colors*. Dating from 1816, this is the very treatise that, to its author's disappointment, Goethe had not deemed worthy of a preface.

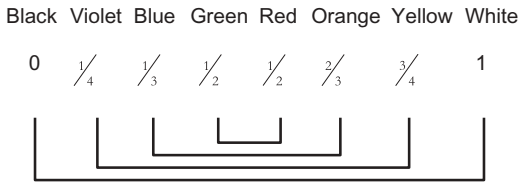
Before engaging the theory of colors proper, Schopenhauer here set forth a theory of vision in general, which contains the new demonstration of the *a priori* nature of the law of causality. That demonstration can be summarized as follows. Our five senses provide no more than the starting-point for our perception of the world outside. The sensations they produce are the data out of which the understanding (*Verstand*) constructs orderly perception by applying the law of causality. At first this happens unconsciously. The understanding, therefore, is not a product of experience; rather, it makes experience possible in the first place, so in Kant's vocabulary it is "transcendental." Thus

understanding traces back the disparate data of our five senses to one and the same cause, which now presents itself as an object. Understanding in its turn, however, is nothing but a function of the brain, that is, of just another part of our bodily organism. Still, it is a much more important part than the sense-organs, since the latter are nothing but pieces of nervous tissue which respond to what stimuli they receive. In the case of visual sensation the stimulus is light, and the response is an activity of the retina. This, then, is where Schopenhauer's theory of colors takes its point of departure.

The retina develops full activity if it receives the full effect of light, or at least of a white body which, under the influence of light upon it, acts in its turn upon the eye with the same force as light itself would do. In the absence of light, that is, if darkness reigns or if a black body acts upon the eye, the retina remains passive. But the influence of light upon the retina and its resulting activity is a matter of degree. Between the extremes of full activity and full passivity lies *divided* activity. This must be differentiated again into *quantitatively* and *qualitatively* divided activity.

The former appears when the different parts of the surface of the retina are active to different degrees. This explains a phenomenon already described by Goethe in his *Farbenlehre* – a black cross or a black circle on a white background, if we gaze at it for some time and then turn our eyes away to look at a grey or a dim surface, produces the opposite phenomenon, a white cross or a white circle on a black background. Those spots on the retina that were affected by the white background are exhausted by the stimulus to such an extent that they cannot at once be activated by the much weaker stimulus of the grey surface. This, in its turn, now acts with its full vigour upon those other parts of the retina that had previously been affected by the black circle and consequently were at rest, thus provoking the full activity of the retina.

Qualitatively divided activity, in contrast, is responsible for the phenomenon of color. Substitute the white circle in the example just given by a yellow one, and then look at the grey surface – now you will see, not a black circle, but a violet one. An orange circle likewise produces a blue after-image, and a red circle ("red" in the sense of Goethe's "true red" or "purple," that is, "magenta") produces a green after-image. Schopenhauer explains this as follows. Yellow, as the brightest color, is somewhat darker than white; violet, which is the darkest color, is somewhat brighter than black, such that violet is as much brighter than black as yellow is darker than white. In consideration of the view that white corresponds to full activity of the retina and black to its full passivity, Schopenhauer finds that yellow corresponds to three-quarters of the full activity and violet to one-quarter. Since the retina naturally aims at full activity, the impression of yellow produces a violet after-image, which makes up for the missing quarter. Both colors are therefore complementary, so together they form a *pair of colors*. Orange, being darker than yellow, is therefore farther removed from full activity. It is as much darker than white as blue is brighter than black; both colors are in the proportion of two-thirds to one-third. They, too, form a pair of colors – a pair that likewise represents two unequal halves of the full activity. Finally, red, as the darkest of bright colors, and green, which is the brightest of dark colors, represent the two wholly equal halves of the full activity; they are therefore in the proportion of half to half. In this particular pair of colors polarity is at its most evident. This is why "red" (magenta) and green are considered as a rule, and by Goethe, too, to be the most harmonious colors. Thus we get the following schema:



It is all very well to join Schopenhauer in arguing that he was in perfect agreement with Goethe against Newton as far as the homogeneity of white light is concerned. We may even concede that, at least formally, he endorsed Goethe's conception of color as an interplay of Light and Darkness. After all, his theory that seeing color means a partial inactivity of the retina might with some good will be said to imply that each color necessarily contains an element of darkness. But it is no less true that in all this he was really transferring Goethe's "primordial phenomenon" from Nature as a whole (of which Man is only a part, however eminent) to our own physiological organization. As a matter of fact, Schopenhauer said as much; and this made it possible for him to put balm on his wounded vanity by the resigned observation that the rupture between Goethe and him was in all likelihood inevitable. In the preface to the second edition of *On Vision and Colors*, which he published long after Goethe had died, he observed that the "amazing objectivity" of Goethe's mind prevented him from returning to the subject (in this case, the seeing eye). Schopenhauer himself, on the contrary, had been predisposed to such a return, since he had been raised in Kant's intellectual tradition.

Meanwhile the truly big bone of contention rested in something else – Schopenhauer was compelled by his own theory to concede that Newton's doctrine contains a few grains of truth after all. First, the phenomenon of color, even if it be sought in the eye rather than in light itself (as Schopenhauer maintained), is nonetheless the result of a divisional process, just as it is in Newton's theory. Also, more importantly, it follows from Schopenhauer's theory that under certain circumstances white light can be produced from a number of colored lights, the sole difference being that the number is two, not seven as with Newton. For if, as Schopenhauer's theory asserts, two opposite colors are complementary with regard to the full activity of the retina (to the division of which they owe their existence), then there can be no doubt that the union of two such colors will produce full activity and, hence, the impression of white light. If, for instance, you lay two prismatic color spectra over each other in such a way that the violet of the first covers the yellow of the second, and the blue of the first the orange of the second, the result will in both cases be white. Now this was among Newton's experiments in the second part of the first book of his *Opticks*, thus providing Goethe with more than enough reason to regard his former disciple as a heretic. Schopenhauer himself tells us so (again in the preface of the second edition of *On Vision and Colors*), but he hastens to assure us that Goethe's verdict was unjust, since this experiment does not at all demonstrate that Newton was right, as it is only *two* colors, not *seven*, which cover one another in this particular case. Newton, so Schopenhauer went on to argue, never understood the true physiological nature of color and thus attributed to light rays what really ought to be attributed to the activity of the retina. Yet – we are still following Schopenhauer's argument here – it cannot be denied that Goethe himself went too far in this regard. Just as with Newton, Goethe failed to understand the true, physiological

nature of color that Schopenhauer was the first to grasp, and this is what made Goethe reject *any* possibility of producing white out of colors. In this way Schopenhauer arrived at the paradoxical conclusion that Newton rightly admitted the possibility of producing white through a union of colors, but for the wrong reason and on behalf of a false theory, whereas Goethe wrongly denied this possibility, albeit in the context of an otherwise correct assembly of facts (an assembly, mind you, which enabled Schopenhauer to be the first finally to come up with a truly adequate account!).

We may sum up the three views here discussed as follows. Newton described colors as due to the properties of the rays that, according to him, compose light, thus concentrating his investigation on the light sources as such. Goethe stressed the contribution of the physical media encountered by light as it travels from the source to the eye of the beholder. Schopenhauer, finally, concentrated on the eye itself, in agreement with his starting-point that one should first study the effect (that is, color as a physiological phenomenon) prior to seeking its external, physical or chemical causes.

Turning now to these causes, we may well ask whether Schopenhauer's physiological reinterpretation of Goethe's definition of color as an interplay of Light and Darkness might not be reconciled in principle with Newton's physical theory, in that the two theories evidently deal with different aspects of reality? Such a gentleman's solution was suggested much later by Werner Heisenberg, and indeed, Schopenhauer was quite near such an agreement. But precisely this makes so readily understandable Goethe's displeasure with how Schopenhauer chose to defend him against Newton. From his point of view his self-opinionated disciple had willy-nilly placed himself on a very slippery slope. In the end Goethe would be left with just the "physiological" or "subjective" colors, together with their moral and aesthetic effects, whereas the "physical" ("subjective-objective") and "chemical" ("objective") colors, and with them Nature as a whole, would be abandoned to the enemy.

With respect to the latter classes of color-phenomena, Schopenhauer did proffer some arguments for regarding Goethe's turbid medium as a far more obvious explanation for the external causes of the divided activity of the retina than Newton's rays of different refrangibility. Even so he had to admit that this was not really a *proof*. Likewise, Schopenhauer quite rightly stressed his own adoption of the possibility of producing white from colors only for colored lights ("physical colors" in Goethe's terminology), not for pigments ("chemical colors" in Goethe's terminology). This matter deserves a closer look, since here we face what is evidently a stumbling block that common sense puts in the way of Newton's theory.

The second version of *On Vision and Colors* contains, not only the author's reflections on his relationship with Goethe, but also a critical review of the later developments in the science of optics and colors that Goethe had not lived to see, or which at least he had already been too old to deal with in an adequate manner. This concerns especially the revival by Young, Fresnel, and Arago of Huygens' wave theory in a modified guise (transverse rather than longitudinal waves). Schopenhauer refuses to have truck with all this in view of the wholly hypothetical, nay mythological, concept of "aether," the vibrations of which are allegedly the cause of the phenomenon of color. In this context he finds particularly amusing the circumstance that the quickest vibrations are attributed to the darkest and least effective of all colors, violet, and the slowest to the lively red which even excites animals! Moreover, the wave theory is just

another form of Newton's doctrine of the objective existence of colors, i.e., of seeking the divisional process which gives rise to the phenomenon of color in light itself rather than in the eye.

In respect of the principal bone of contention for both Goethe and Schopenhauer, the alleged heterogeneity of white light, Schopenhauer was quite right with his observation that there was no difference between an emission theory like Newton's and a wave theory like Huygens'. Today we can go along with Schopenhauer's characterization of the concept of aether. But, with the inevitable wisdom after the event, we can also remark that, in its subsequent development, the wave theory confirmed in its own modest way Schopenhauer's interpretation of color as partial activity and inactivity of the retina with its three kinds of color receptors in the eye, for short, middle-long, and long waves, respectively. In addition, the later wave theory shed new light on the stumbling block just mentioned. For a painter's typical common-sense response to Newton used to be: "For Heaven's sake, if I mix Newton's seven colors, I do not get white but some mud-color, do I not?" Newton himself was aware that there was something of a problem in this regard. His suggestion that this was only a consequence of the failure of available pigments to provide the pure prismatic colors was not too convincing, though. Conversely, Goethe reluctantly conceded that Newton's theory met the phenomenon of the rainbow better than his own. However, Goethe's solution of this little problem (namely, that Nature played him a bad trick here) tells us more about the incomparably majestic naïveté of its author than that it is apt to convince us!

What about Schopenhauer in this regard? He was aware of the difference between colored lights and pigments, as we just saw. Still, this did not prevent him from heaping scorn on the French physicist Pouillet, who had quite rightly asserted that "orange and green give yellow" (remarkably, Pouillet followed Goethe and Schopenhauer in making "orange" stand for modern prismatic "red"). "Just try to concoct yellow out of these!" Schopenhauer snorted, but please mind that this was said by the same man who had admitted the possibility of "concocting" white out of his three pairs of polar colors! Out of the colored lights, not out of the corresponding pigments, no doubt, but so did Pouillet. The fact is that, as a consequence of his revision of Goethe's original doctrine, Schopenhauer simply was no longer entitled to use such common-sense arguments, and so he managed to entangle himself in new contradictions. "This is how the making of concessions to Newton necessarily ends," Goethe would certainly have responded. We, for our part, are rather inclined to say that Schopenhauer anticipated Helmholtz' distinction between additive and subtractive color mixing. In the former, the resulting color is brighter than each of its components, due to the eye's receiving the sum of the light energies that gather in one place, as is the case when, e.g., differently colored lights are superimposed on a projection screen. In the latter, the resulting color is darker than each of its components, due to the reinforcement of the absorption process, and thus the diminishing of the total light energy that reaches the eye. This is the case when, for instance, pigments are mixed. We know now that their colors are due to the light they reflect after their surfaces have absorbed their specific part of the wavelength area. For all his "improvement" of Goethe's doctrine, Schopenhauer was still too closely tied to it to be able to follow Helmholtz on this new pathway. Consequently, he stands before us in this department of the history of ideas as the man who, popularly expressed, "fell between two chairs."

In this department only? At the start of this chapter we briefly pointed at comparable issues in the history of ideas. And we end now by adding that one may well ask whether Kant (had he lived to see it) would have been more pleased with the *physiological* manner in which Schopenhauer chose to "defend" his doctrine of the *a priori* nature of causality than Goethe was with the (likewise physiological) manner in which Schopenhauer chose to "defend" his doctrine of the homogeneity of white light and, hence, of colors as an interplay of Light and Darkness! Here, too, Schopenhauer was a heretic – in this case, a heretical Kantian. This, too, moved him near the brink of new developments, while at the same time preventing him from crossing the threshold. But that is definitely another story.

See also 10 Schopenhauer's *On the Will in Nature*: The Reciprocal Containment of Idealism and Realism.

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5

Schopenhauer and Transcendental Idealism

DOUGLAS MCDERMID

Nothing is so persistently and constantly misunderstood as idealism.

(WWR II, 7)

1

In his essay on Schopenhauer, Thomas Mann (1938, 392) famously compared *The World as Will and Representation* to a symphony in four movements. If we take Mann's musical metaphor to heart, we find ourselves facing a fanciful question – namely, what is the opening chord of the first, metaphysical movement of this symphony of ideas? The answer is not far to seek; indeed, only the philosophically tone-deaf could fail to hear that chord thundering throughout the work's first, emphatic paragraph:

> "The world is my representation": this is a truth valid with reference to every living and knowing being, although man alone can bring it into reflective abstract consciousness. If he does, philosophical discernment has dawned on him. It then becomes clear and certain to him that he does not know a sun and an earth, but only an eye that sees a sun, a hand that feels an earth;[1] that the world around him is there only as representation, in other words, only in reference to another thing, namely, that which represents, and this is himself. . . . Therefore no truth is more certain, more independent of all others, and less in need of proof than this, namely that everything which exists for knowledge, and hence the whole of this world, is only object in relation to the subject, perception of the perceiver, in a word, representation. Naturally this holds good of the present as well as of the past, of what is remotest as well as of what is nearest; for it holds good of time and space themselves, in which all these distinctions arise. Everything that in any way belongs and can belong to the world is inevitably associated with this being-conditioned by the subject, and it exists only for the subject. The world is representation.
>
> (WWR I, 3)

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And so Schopenhauer's *magnum opus* begins, not with an obscure scholastic whimper, but with a bold and artfully arresting bang: "The world is my representation." Analyzing this striking *Leitmotiv* – and the transcendental idealism it is used to introduce – is the task of the present chapter.

2

Transcendental idealism was defined succinctly by Kant as "the doctrine that appearances are to be regarded as being, one and all, representations only, and that time and space are therefore only sensible forms of our intuition, not determinations given as existing by themselves, not conditions of objects viewed as things in themselves" (Kant 1781, A 369). Two key ideas emerge from this definition: first, that all objects in space and time are (mind-dependent) appearances or representations; second, that there is nevertheless *some* mind-independent reality – viz., a way the world is "in itself," apart from the subjective forms under which it appears to us. Since Schopenhauer enthusiastically accepts both ideas, he may be classified as a transcendental idealist. To some extent, however, the unqualified application of this label is liable to mislead, because Schopenhauer's brand of idealism differs markedly from what we find in Kant. To get a sense of what separates the two idealists (as well as what unites them), we must re-acquaint ourselves with six theses endorsed by Schopenhauer:

S1. The world is representation; that is, things in space and time are mind-forged phenomena or appearances conditioned by subjects in two ways: materially (since such objects are representations) and formally (since such objects must conform to the a priori forms of our knowledge) (WWR II, 8).

S2. The world is not *merely* representation, however; for it has another, more fundamental "side" or aspect. The world is also something in itself, apart from the way it appears to us under the forms of representation (of space, time and causality) imposed by the intellect (WWR I, 4).

S3. *Pace* Kant, the mind-independent thing-in-itself cannot be inferred as the cause of phenomena or appearances, since the law of causality applies only to mind-dependent representations (WWR I, 502).

S4. Space and time constitute the *principium individuationis* (principle of individuation); but since both are merely subjective forms of representation, plurality and differentiation must be foreign to whatever the world is in itself – viz., to its inner nature or essence (WWR I, 113). Hence we must not speak of *things in themselves* (as Kant was wont to do).

S5. Every entity in space and time is both phenomenon and thing-in-itself; for the thing-in-itself is present in all objects as their inner nature, essence, being, or "kernel" (PP II, 91). The world as representation is thus the manifestation – the "objectification" or "visibility" – of whatever the world is in itself.

S6. The thing-in-itself cannot be known through perception, which yields knowledge of nothing but phenomena. To this extent, Kant was right. However, the thing-in-itself is not totally or absolutely unknowable (as Kant held); for it can be

identified with what presents itself to us in self-consciousness as will (WWR I, 103). (See Janaway 1999, 158–65.)

As any attentive reader of *The World as Will and Representation* knows, these six theses shape Schopenhauer's views on a wide range of topics. They inform his anti-Panglossian pessimism; his ethic of compassion; his critique of scientism; his conception of art; his ruminations on history; his impatience with theology; his vilification of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel; his picture of Nature as strife incarnate; his grim estimate of human nature; his thoughts about determinism and freedom; his analysis of sexual desire; his understanding of salvation and sanctity; his claims about death and the "indestructibility of our inner nature" (WWR II, 463); and much else besides. While this is not the place to trace these fascinating connections, their existence must not be forgotten; for they remind us that transcendental idealism is, in a sense, the foundation of Schopenhauer's system.

Here we will be concerned only with the foundation of that foundation, so to speak – that is, with theses S1 and S2. In what follows, two issues shall engage our attention: (1) Although Schopenhauer proclaims that "no truth is more certain, more independent of all others, and less in need of proof" than idealism (WWR I, 3), he nevertheless deigns to excogitate numerous arguments for it. What are these arguments, and upon what range of commitments do they draw? (2) Not only does Schopenhauer think that Kant's rigorous formulation of the phenomenon/thing-in-itself distinction – "Kant's greatest merit" (WWR I, 417) – is fundamentally correct; he also thinks that it is an epoch-making achievement in the history of philosophy. What lies behind this judgment, and what does it reveal about Schopenhauer's understanding of transcendental idealism?

The first of these queries is addressed in Section 3; the second, in Section 4.

3

Though convinced of the truth of transcendental idealism, Schopenhauer realizes that it is apt to strike stolid votaries of common sense as preposterous:

> In endless space countless luminous spheres, round each of which some dozen smaller illuminated ones revolve, hot at the core and covered over with a hard cold crust; on this crust a mouldy film has produced living and knowing beings: this is empirical truth, the real, the world. Yet for a being who thinks, it is a precarious position to stand on one of these numberless spheres freely floating in boundless space, without knowing whence or whither, and to be only one of innumerable similar beings that throng, press, and toil, restlessly and rapidly arising and passing away in beginningless and endless time. Here there is nothing permanent but matter alone, and the recurrence of the same varied organic forms by means of certain ways and channels that inevitably exist as they do. All that empirical science can teach is only the more precise nature and rule of these events. But at last the philosophy of modern times, especially through Berkeley and Kant, has called to mind that all this is in the first instance only *phenomenon of the brain*, and is encumbered by so many great and different *subjective* conditions that its supposed absolute reality vanishes, and leaves room for an entirely different world-order that lies at the root

> of that phenomenon, in other words, is related to it as is the thing-in-itself to the mere appearance.
>
> (WWR II, 3)

As the first two-thirds of this dramatic passage demonstrate, Schopenhauer is perfectly capable of appreciating the intuitive lure of tough-minded realism, with its anti-Protagorean picture of the universe as a place of which man is most definitely not the measure. Yet the final third of the passage abruptly reminds us that Schopenhauer thinks such realism cannot withstand scrutiny. Why not? Because "the philosophy of modern times" has demonstrated that "that natural and childlike realism in which we are all born" (WWR I, xxiii) only *seems* tenable; as soon as one reflects critically on its presuppositions and its implications, one sees that it simply cannot be true.

Again, why? To give a better idea of where Schopenhauer thinks realism goes awry, we shall now review the relevant arguments – twelve in all – which are to be found scattered throughout his works. As the discerning reader will observe, these arguments vary quite widely, not merely in quality, but also in type. For one thing, there is the question of their provenance: several of Schopenhauer's arguments derive predictably from Berkeley and Kant, but others do not. Second, there is the issue of thematic content: epistemological considerations drive many of the arguments, but by no means all. Third, there is the identity of their targets: while some objections criticize the peculiarities of particular forms of realism, others take direct aim at the very idea of a mind-independent world. Finally, there is the matter of divergent ambitions: certain lines of reasoning purport to be absolutely conclusive refutations of realism, whereas others are more modest.

And now, without further ado, we turn to Schopenhauer's twelve arguments.

3.1. The Argument from Immediacy

According to Schopenhauer, Descartes discerned the epistemic priority of the subjective; for he taught us that our representations are the only items of which we have immediate knowledge. Indeed, it was because Descartes stressed this that he merits the appellation "the father of modern philosophy" (PP I, 3):

> By his taking *cogito ergo sum* as the only thing certain, and provisionally regarding the existence of the world as problematical, the essential and only correct starting-point, and at the same time the true point of support, of all philosophy was really found. This point, indeed, is essentially and of necessity the subjective, *our own consciousness*. For this alone is and remains that which is immediate; everything else, be what it may, is first mediated and conditioned by consciousness, and therefore dependent on it.
>
> (WWR II, 4)

Schopenhauer thus credits Descartes with a revolutionary insight – namely, that philosophy cannot take the existence of a mind-independent world for granted. Building on this Cartesian idea, he then reasons as follows: if nothing is immediately known except the subjective contents of one's own mind or consciousness, then everything else must be mediated by consciousness; but whatever is mediated by consciousness is

necessarily conditioned by it, and therefore dependent upon it. Consequently, physical objects cannot exist independently of mind or consciousness. Q.E.D.

3.2. The Argument from Certainty

The next argument proceeds from a thesis about the nature of philosophy – viz., that philosophy, as a self-respecting science, must rest on first principles that are immediately certain or indubitable. Where are these principles of adamant to be sought? Once again, Descartes comes to our rescue; for he taught us that such certainty is found only in the subjective domain of one's mind, to which one has direct and privileged access:

> For nothing is more certain than that no one ever came out of himself in order to identify himself immediately with things different from him; but everything of which he has certain, sure, and hence immediate knowledge, lies within his consciousness. Beyond this consciousness, therefore, there can be no *immediate* certainty; but the first principles of a science must have such a certainty. It is quite appropriate to the empirical standpoint of all the other sciences to assume the objective world as positively and actually existing; it is not appropriate to the standpoint of philosophy, which has to go back to what is primary and original. *Consciousness* alone is immediately given, hence the basis of philosophy is limited to the facts of consciousness; in other words, philosophy is essentially *idealistic*.
>
> (WWR II, 4–5)

Since "[c]onsciousness alone is immediately given" (WWR II, 5), philosophy's first principles must be drawn exclusively from the domain of consciousness. And this, we are told, is enough to give the lie to realism: "true philosophy must at all costs be idealistic; indeed it must be so merely to be honest" (WWR II, 4).

3.3. The Argument from Epistemic Access

Like Berkeley and Kant, Schopenhauer exploits the idea that realism threatens to make the external world unknowable in principle:

> Realism, which commends itself to the crude understanding by appearing to be founded on fact, starts precisely from an arbitrary assumption, and is in consequence an empty castle in the air, since it skips or denies the first fact of all, namely that all that we know lies in consciousness.
>
> (WWR II, 5)

And yet if "all that we know lies in consciousness," how can we know that our representations accurately reflect a mind-independent world? The answer, Schopenhauer intimates, is simple and certain: no-one can know this, because we have no representation-independent access to that world. Since an objective, mind-independent world (if such there be) is consequently beyond our ken, we must reject realism – unless, that is, we are prepared to tolerate skepticism.

3.4. The Argument from Illusion

According to Schopenhauer, "the world must be recognized, from one aspect at least, as akin to a dream, indeed as capable of being put in the same class with a dream" (WWR II, 4); for the intellect which "conjures up during sleep a perfectly objective, perceptible, and indeed palpable world must have just as large a share in the presentation of the objective world of wakefulness" (WWR II, 4). This is supposed to put realism on the defensive – or at least those so-called "naïve" direct realisms which credit us with some mode of unmediated access to material objects. For when I dream, I cannot be said to perceive any mind-independent objects; all I apprehend are my own representations. If, then, the world of veridical perception is indeed "akin to a dream," it stands to reason that what I am confronted with in cases of veridical perception are also representations – and not (*pace* our direct realist) mind-independent things.

3.5. The Argument from Inconceivability

Schopenhauer concedes that realism may at first blush seem intelligible, even obvious: "That the *objective world would exist* even if there existed no knowing being at all, naturally seems at the first onset to be sure and certain" (WWR II, 5). Like Berkeley and Fichte, however, he maintains that attempts to conceive of a world existing apart from all minds must prove futile:

> That the *objective world would exist* even if there existed no knowing being at all, naturally seems at the first onset to be sure and certain, because it can be thought in the abstract, without the contradiction that it carries within itself coming to light. But if we try to realize this abstract thought, in other words, to reduce it to representations of perception, from which alone (like everything abstract), it can have content and truth; and if accordingly we attempt to *imagine an objective world without a knowing subject*, then we become aware that what we are imagining at that moment is in truth the opposite of what we intended, namely, nothing but just the process in the intellect of a knowing being who perceives an objective world, that is to say, precisely what we had sought to exclude.
>
> (WWR II, 5)

Here is one way of glossing this passage. (See McDermid 2004 for others.) Suppose we say, as empiricists, that "concepts borrow their contents only from the representations of perception" (WWR II, 192). However, if we admit that the content of our concepts must be drawn from perceptual experience – that (in Schopenhauerian terms) abstract representations are derived from intuitive representations – then we must confess that we cannot conceive of mind-independent objects (WWR I, 6–8, 35). Why? The reason is straightforward: as the heirs of the tradition inaugurated by Descartes, we are also wedded to the idea that perception acquaints us with nothing but (mind-dependent) representations. To think of physical objects, therefore, is really just to think of some possible set or sequence of representations – nothing more.

In essence, what we have here is a transcendental argument: if physical objects were mind-independent, we could not even think of them; but we can think of them; ergo, realism cannot be correct.

3.6. The Argument from Perspective

There are, however, other ways to gloss Schopenhauer's insistence that we cannot "imagine an objective world without a knowing subject" (WWR II, 5). One such alternative reading sets out from the thought that to conceive of a physical object, x, is to imagine x as perceived. And what is it to imagine x as perceived? It is to imagine how x would appear to a perceiver apprehending x from some perspective situated within the spatiotemporal world to which x belongs. To be sure, I may imagine an object – the Statue of Liberty, say – as perceived from more than one such perspective; of that there can be no doubt. However, what I cannot do is imagine it as it looks from the fabled "view from nowhere" – that is, as apprehended from absolutely no perspective at all. The upshot is that to conceive of a physical object is always to conceive of it as "object for a subject" – that is, to imagine how it would appear from some perspective or other. But if this is correct – if "in the existence of matter we always think only of its being represented by a subject" (WWR II, 16) – then we cannot conceive of physical objects as they are "in themselves," or apart from the standpoint of perceivers.

3.7. The Argument from the Subject–Object Antithesis

In his *Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy*, Schopenhauer affects to be puzzled by Kant's failure to derive idealism from a putatively self-evident truth:

> It is certainly remarkable that he did not trace that merely relative existence of the phenomenon from the simple, undeniable truth which lay so near to him, namely "No object without a subject," in order thus, at the very root, to show that the object, because it always exists only in relation to a subject, is dependent thereon, is conditioned thereby, and is therefore mere phenomenon that does not exist in itself, does not exist unconditionally.
>
> (WWR I, 434)

According to Schopenhauer, therefore, it is an apodictic truth that there can be "no object without a subject"; for the object "always exists only in relation to a subject" (WWR I, 434). Yet this principle is denied by realists, committed as they are to preserving the object's independence from the subject. Because "[t]he aim of realism is just the object without subject" (WWR II, 12), realism must be reckoned incoherent: "Realism overlooks the fact that, outside its reference to the subject, the object no longer remains object" (FR, 51). (See Janaway 1994, 26.)

3.8. The Argument from Simplicity

Schopenhauer wryly mocks the realist's commitment to "a world of objects in themselves which is exactly like, and runs parallel to, the world of representation, and yet is connected therewith not directly" – a world he calls "the most superfluous thing on earth, for it itself never enters perception, and the exactly similar world of the representation pursues its own course without it" (FR, 51). His basic accusation is that the world which realism posits is a redundant duplicate of the world of our representations:

> According to realism, the world is supposed to exist, as we know it, independently of this knowledge. Now let us once remove from it all knowing beings, and thus leave behind only inorganic and vegetable nature. Rock, tree, and brook are there, and the blue sky; sun, moon, and stars illuminate this world, as before, only of course to no purpose, since there exists no eye to see such things. But then let us subsequently put into the world a knowing being. That world then presents itself once more in his brain, and repeats itself inside that brain exactly as it was previously outside it. Thus to the *first* world a *second* has been added, which, although completely separated from the first, resembles it to a nicety . . . I think that, on closer conviction, all this proves absurd enough, and thus leads to the conviction that that absolutely *objective* world outside the head, independent of it and *prior* to all knowledge, which we at first imagined we had conceived, was really no other than the second world already known subjectively, the world of the representation, and that it is this alone which we are actually capable of conceiving. Accordingly the assumption is automatically forced on us that the world, as we know it, exists only for our knowledge.
>
> (WWR II, 9–10)

If we hack our way through the lush jungle of Schopenhauer's rhetoric, we discover the following line of reasoning. According to the realism targeted by Schopenhauer, there are two "worlds": (i) a postulated world of mind-independent things existing in splendid isolation; and (ii) the world of our subjective perceptual representations which aim at reproducing the first, objective world. Where realism is prodigal, idealism is frugal: it says there is but one world – viz., that of our immediately known representations. Plainly, then, idealism is the more parsimonious theory. Assuming that we should opt for the simplest explanation (all other things being equal), and assuming that realism has no explanatory advantages over idealism, Schopenhauer concludes that we should spurn realism and espouse idealism.

3.9. The Argument from Synthetic a Priori *Knowledge*

Like Kant, Schopenhauer maintains that we possess a species of knowledge undreamt of in Hume's philosophy. This is *synthetic a priori* knowledge: that is to say, knowledge of the fixed and fundamental order of Nature which is not derived from our experience but rather presupposed by it. How, now, are we to account for such knowledge? We cannot do so, Schopenhauer declares, unless we extirpate the idea that Nature is mind-independent. Why? Because it would be impossible for our intellects to grasp the structure of that world prior to having any experience of it unless the intellect itself were the source of that structure:

> the assumption that things exist as such, even outside and independently of our consciousness, is really absurd. Thus are we so deeply immersed in time, space, causality, and in the whole regular course of experience resting on these; we (and in fact even the animals) are so completely at home, and know how to find our way in experience from the very beginning. This would not be possible if our intellect were one thing and things another; but it can be explained only from the fact that the two constitute a whole; that the intellect itself creates that order, and exists only for things, but that things also exist only for it.
>
> (WWR II, 9)

What gives realism its quietus, in short, is the existence of a pre-established structural correspondence between the world and our minds.

3.10. The Argument from Forms of Representation

Here is the nub of the next, equally Kantian argument: "*Kant's greatest merit is the distinction of the phenomenon from the thing-in-itself*, based on the proof that between things and us there always stands the *intellect*, and that on this account they cannot be known according to what they may be in themselves" (WWR I, 417–18). The basic idea can be captured metaphorically: the intellect, through which we view reality, is not a window or mirror but a lens or prism. To be more precise, the intellect comes with its own built-in forms of representation: "the intellect from its own resources furnishes all the *forms* of this world, namely time, space, and causality" (PP II, 107). Since these forms are all a priori, it is assumed that they must be alien to the way things are in themselves; as a result, "a world that presents itself by virtue of a priori forms is precisely on that account a mere phenomenon" (FR, 232; see Guyer 1999, 104–106, and Young 2005, 23–24). Once again, then, we are driven to conclude that things in space and time are subjectively conditioned appearances.

3.11. The Argument from the Subordination of Intellect to Will

Members of the philosophic guild, particularly those of a rationalist bent, have long been tempted to think of the intellect as a god-like power which surveys reality freely and disinterestedly. Not so, says Schopenhauer: far from being master in its own house, the human intellect is condemned to serve and slave, drudge-like, for the will. Like a sighted but lame man perched on the back of a blind but mighty giant (WWR II, 209), our intellect is not sovereign and self-moved but is instead a "secondary faculty" (PP II, 66) by nature – a mere instrument or tool used by the will to accomplish its down-to-earth ends.

How is this supposed to bear on the fate of realism? Since the knowledge acquired via the intellect "exists only for the purpose of maintaining each animal individual" (PP II, 96), the intellect itself comes equipped only with those cognitive forms required "to grasp mere relations, such being sufficient for the service of the individual will" (PP II, 36). As a result, our intellect can at most be counted upon to yield knowledge of how things stand in relation to us; but it certainly cannot be counted upon to limn their inner essence or nature. Hence what things are in themselves cannot be grasped by the intellect and its apparatus of forms. (See Young 2005, 28–32, and Vaihinger 1935, xxx–xxxi.)

3.12. The Argument from Morality

We come at last to a most unusual objection to realism: an objection animated not by ideas about knowledge, certainty, perception, meaning, synthetic *a priori* truths, or simplicity, but by a concern with the possibility of moral conduct. The argument begins by observing that benighted realists do not regard space and time as the subjective forms of perception and knowledge; rather, they take them to be wholly objective

determinations of things in themselves. But space and time together constitute the *principium individuationis*. Accordingly, realists cannot regard the plurality which characterizes the spatiotemporal world as merely apparent or phenomenal. Plurality, they must avow, is not a product of our perspective; it is real *sans phrase*.

According to Schopenhauer, this last claim has surprisingly far-reaching implications. If plurality and individuality are, metaphysically speaking, the Last Word – if the barrier between oneself and others, between ego and non-ego, is absolute and impassable – then I cannot be affected by another's suffering as if it were my own. But it is precisely this immediate identification with another's woe which defines compassion, "the great mystery of ethics" (BM, 212). Hence the realist, if he is to be consistent, must regard compassion in this sense as "mistaken and due to a delusion" (BM, 205). But such compassion, Schopenhauer says, is the soul of morality: "Only insofar as an action has sprung from compassion does it have moral value" (BM, 144). Hence realism is "destructive for ethics" (WWR II, 175).

Throughout this section I have scrupulously refrained from passing judgment on Schopenhauer's arguments – but not, I wish to emphasize, because I am convinced that they are all beyond reproach. (Far from it.) My silence on this score has two main (and mundane) sources: first, the underlying purpose of this chapter is to describe the "lay of the land" in a non-polemical manner; and second, space limitations make it impossible for me both to expound a dozen arguments *and* offer thoughtful evaluations of all of them. Those who desire help in assessing Schopenhauer's ratiocinations should not despond, however: most of his arguments have received their share of scholarly scrutiny, so the interested reader will have no difficulty locating discussions of them. (See Young 2005; McDermid 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004; Janaway 1994, 1989; and Hamlyn 1980.)

4

We turn now to our second question. Why, exactly, did Schopenhauer attach such weight and significance to what he called "Kant's greatest merit": "the distinction of the phenomenon from the thing-in-itself" (WWR I, 417)? In this section, we will identify two key ideas which any satisfactory answer to this question must incorporate. The first concerns that distinction's place in the history of modern philosophy; the second, its relation to Plato and the Upanishads.

4.1. The Problem of the Ideal and the Real: From Locke to Kant

According to Schopenhauer, the central project of modern philosophy has been that of distinguishing those elements in human knowledge which are subjective, or contributed by the knower, from those which are objective, or derived from some source independent of the mind. It was Descartes, "the father of modern philosophy" (PP I, 3), who first put this problem – that of "the ideal and the real" – squarely on the philosophical agenda:

> Descartes is rightly regarded as the father of modern philosophy primarily and generally because he helped the faculty of reason to stand on its own feet by teaching men to use

> their brains in place whereof the Bible, on the one hand, and Aristotle, on the other, had previously served. But he is the father in a special and narrower sense because he was the first to bring to consciousness the problem whereon all philosophizing has since mainly turned, namely that of the ideal and the real. This is the question concerning what in our knowledge is objective and what subjective, and hence what eventually is to be ascribed by us to things different from us and what is to be attributed to ourselves.
>
> (PP I, 3)

Locke, Schopenhauer acknowledges, shed some much-needed light on this problem when he drew his well-known distinction between primary and secondary qualities; that is, between those qualities of physical objects which are in the things themselves "whether any one's senses perceive them or no" (Locke 1975, II.viii.16) and those qualities of physical objects which are "nothing in the objects themselves, but powers to produce various sensations in us" (Locke 1975, II.viii.10). Since Locke aimed at understanding the contrast between the way objects are in themselves and the way they (merely) appear to us, Schopenhauer regards the Lockean primary/secondary quality distinction as "the origin of the distinction between thing-in-itself and phenomenon" (PP I, 17). However, Schopenhauer finds two grave and inter-related defects in Locke's distinction – defects which we can clearly and confidently recognize as such only in light of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.*

First, Locke remains a realist. Despite his acknowledgment that many of the properties we are accustomed to attribute to physical objects are not actually "in" things themselves but are instead products of the way things affect us, Locke retains the idea that objects must have *some* mind-independent properties – to wit, the primary qualities of extension, figure, and the like. This concession to realism is indefensible, Schopenhauer contends, in light of the later Kantian doctrine of the ideality of space, time, and causality:

> [W]ith Locke the thing-in-itself is something indeed without colour, sound, smell, taste, neither warm nor cold, neither soft nor hard, neither smooth nor rough; yet it remains something that is extended, has form, is impenetrable, is at rest or in motion, and has measure and number. With Kant, on the other hand, the thing-in-itself has laid aside even all these last qualities also, because they are possible only through time, space, and causality. These latter, however, spring from our intellect (brain) just as do colours, tones, smells, and so on from the nerves of sense organs.
>
> (WWR II, 20)

Implicit in this first criticism is a second, more fundamental objection: Locke's erroneous conviction that primary qualities are mind-independent stems from his failure to see what the first *Critique* made it impossible not to see – namely, that the human mind, far from being a tabula rasa or empty chamber, comes equipped with *a priori* forms which structure experience. Simply put, Locke is a realist because he grossly underestimates the subject-derived or "ideal" element in our knowledge:

> Locke had shown that the secondary qualities of things, such as sound, odour, colour, hardness, softness, smoothness, and the like, founded on the affections of the senses, do not belong to the objective body, the thing-in-itself. To this, on the contrary, he attributed

> only the primary qualities, i.e., those that presuppose merely space and impenetrability, and so extension, shape, solidity, number, mobility. But this Lockean distinction, which was easy to find, and keeps only to the surface of things, was, so to speak, merely a youthful prelude to the Kantian. Thus, starting from an incomparably higher standpoint, Kant explains all that Locke had admitted as *qualitates primariae*, that is, as qualities of the thing-in-itself, as also belonging merely to its phenomenon in our faculty of perception or apprehension, and this is just because the conditions of this faculty, namely space, time, and causality, are known by us a priori. Thus Locke had abstracted from the thing-in-itself the share that the sense-organs have in its phenomenon; but Kant further abstracted the share of the brain function (although not under this name). In this way the distinction between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself obtained an infinitely greater significance, and a very much deeper meaning. For this purpose he had to take in hand the great separation of our a priori from our a posteriori knowledge, which before him had never been made with proper precision and completeness or with clear and conscious knowledge.
>
> (WWR I, 418)

Thus when Kant formulated the phenomenon/thing-in-itself distinction, he found the Holy Grail of modern philosophy – a Grail the valiant Locke had sought in vain. At last a solution to the problem of the ideal and the real was in sight; for Kant demonstrated that although there must be a way things are in themselves, we can only perceive mind-dependent phenomena conditioned by the intellect's own forms or inborn structures. And so, Schopenhauer pleads, a just and defensible balance was finally struck between the competing claims of the ideal and the real.

4.2. Appearance and Reality: Plato and the Upanishads

Nevertheless, Schopenhauer does not think that the significance of Kant's phenomenon/thing-in-itself distinction is exhausted by an analysis of its role in modern European philosophy. Kant's distinction, he insists, is to be lauded and prized for another reason – namely, because it clarifies and vindicates the ancient dichotomy between appearance and reality which is central to the Upanishads and to the writings of Plato (WWR I, 419–20).

Take first the case of Plato. In his celebrated Allegory of the Cave (*Republic* 514[a]-517[a]), the shadow-filled cave-cum-prison represents the world of particular objects apprehended by the senses. Though reassuringly familiar, this world is naught but a specious projection or apparition: a bewitching realm of plurality and flux, of illusion and nescience. In contrast, the sunlit world above the cave symbolizes the realm of the supersensible and eternal Forms: immaterial archetypes of which the material things we perceive are but fleeting and imperfect copies. Though Plato's symbol-laden Allegory is worlds away from Kant's style of abstract argumentation, Schopenhauer maintains that their content is much the same:

> Now as Kant's separation of the phenomenon from the thing-in-itself, arrived at in the manner previously explained, far surpassed in the profundity and thoughtfulness of its argument all that had ever existed, it was infinitely important in its results. For in it he propounded, quite originally and in an entirely new way, the same truth, found from a new aspect and on a new path, which Plato untiringly repeats, and generally expresses in his language as follows. This world that appears to the senses has no true being, but only

> a ceaseless becoming; it is, and also it is not; and its comprehension is not so much a knowledge as an illusion. This is what he expressed in a myth at the beginning of the seventh book of the *Republic*, the most important passage in all his works, which has been mentioned already in the third book of the present work.[2] He says that men, firmly chained in a dark cave, see neither the genuine original light nor actual things, but only the inadequate light of the fire in the cave, and the shadows of actual things passing by the fire behind their backs. Yet they imagine that the shadows are the reality, and that determining the succession of those shadows is true wisdom.
>
> (WWR I, 419)

Take next the Upanishads,[3] the speculative and mystical treatises found at the conclusion of the Vedas. According to one influential school of interpretation with which Schopenhauer was familiar (Advaita Vedanta), the Upanishads teach that the everyday world of change and multiplicity is a fleeting and deceitful phantasm; neither truly real nor a sheer sham, it is known as "the veil of Maya" (see Nicholls 1999). Underlying this vast and captivating spectacle is Brahman: the sole reality, impersonal and immutable, outside of space and time. Once again, Schopenhauer remarks, we find ourselves on curiously familiar ground:

> The same truth, though presented quite differently, is also a principal teaching of the Vedas and the Puranas, namely the doctrine of Maya, by which is understood nothing but what Kant calls the phenomenon as opposed to the thing-in-itself. For the work of Maya is stated to be precisely this visible world in which we are, a magic effect called into being, an unstable and inconstant illusion without substance, comparable to the optical illusion and the dream, a veil enveloping consciousness, a something of which it is equally false and equally true to say that it is and that it is not.
>
> (WWR I, 419)

It is not difficult to descry Schopenhauer's syncretist moral: the Upanishads' veil of Maya, Plato's crepuscular Cave-world, and Kantian phenomena are different ways of talking about the same thing – namely, an ephemeral veneer of appearances beneath which lies an unconditioned reality inaccessible to sense.[4] And yet to say, with Plato and the Upanishads, that Nature is "mere" appearance is to say (roughly) that it is a realm of impermanence and endless becoming where no true good – no lasting peace, no satisfaction, no happiness – can be found. Hence if we read Kant through lenses ground in ancient Greece and India, as Schopenhauer does, we will be pre-disposed to see the everyday world as a dream-like illusion, wherein all is vanity and a striving after wind. When re-interpreted in this way, Kant's Dry-as-Dust vocabulary becomes the vital and expressive vehicle of pessimism – a remarkable feat of rhetorical legerdemain, to which Nietzsche called attention in "Schopenhauer as Educator":

> Everything [Schopenhauer] subsequently appropriated to himself from life and books, from the whole wealth of the sciences, was to him hardly more than a colouring and a means of expression; he employed even the Kantian philosophy above all as an extraordinary rhetorical instrument through which he believed he could speak of that picture more clearly.
>
> (Nietzsche 1874, 182)

Having reviewed what Schopenhauer says about transcendental idealism's distinctive place in the history of philosophy, we can now understand why he regards Kant's elaboration of that doctrine as such a magnificent achievement. On the one hand, the phenomenon/thing-in-itself distinction is presented as the solution to the problem of the ideal and the real; as such, it is the culmination of the modern tradition of epistemology-centered philosophy. On the other hand, Kant's distinction is thought to validate a dramatic view of the visible world which goes back to Plato and the Upanishads; in this sense, it can be viewed as "a new name for some old ways of thinking" (to filch a phrase from William James).[5] Since, moreover, one of those "old ways of thinking" is an export from India, Kant's transcendental idealism allows us to connect Western philosophy with its Eastern counterpart – as well as philosophy's future with its origins.

5

No wonder, then, Schopenhauer reveres Kant. At times, indeed, he writes about his great idealist predecessor with all the conviction of a new convert, the devotion of a disciple, and the fervor of an evangelist:

> I have already explained in the preface to the first edition that my philosophy starts off from Kant's, and therefore presupposes a thorough knowledge of it; I repeat this here. Kant's teaching produces a fundamental change in every mind that has grasped it. This change is so great that it may be regarded as an intellectual rebirth. It alone is capable of really removing the inborn realism which arises from the original disposition of the intellect . . . [T]he man who has not mastered the Kantian philosophy, whatever else he may have studied, is, so to speak, in a state of innocence; in other words, he has remained in the grasp of that natural and childlike realism in which we are all born, and which qualifies one for every possible thing except philosophy.
>
> (WWR I, xxiii–xxiv)

If Schopenhauer occasionally sounds like a philosophical missionary or apologist, that is because this is partly what he proved to be; for his writings unquestionably did much to propagate the gospel of transcendental idealism. Friedrich Nietzsche, Paul Deussen, Hans Vaihinger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Popper,[6] even C.D. Broad (1959, 48–49) – all these worthies were initiated into the mysteries and rites of the Kantian cultus through their study of Schopenhauer. Though remarkable, such influence is far from surprising: an eloquent and lively stylist, Schopenhauer was able to expound the phenomenon/thing-in-itself distinction in language which is less forbiddingly technical than what we find in the *Critique of Pure Reason* or even in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. For this reason alone, any student of the history of idealism – including scholars with no particular interest in the elaborate system set forth in the pages of *The World as Will and Representation* – would do well to study the first article in Schopenhauer's metaphysical creed*:* "The world is my representation" (WWR I, 3).

See also 7 The Consistency of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics; 10 Schopenhauer's *On the Will in Nature*: The Reciprocal Containment of Idealism and Realism; 18 Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy; 24 Schopenhauer's Influence on Wittgenstein; 25

Schopenhauer's Fairy Tale about Fichte: The Origin of *The World as Will and Representation* in German Idealism.

Notes

1 Note, however, that eyes and hands belong to the same category – that of physical objects – as the sun and earth. In "Nueva Refutación del Tiempo," Jorge Luis Borges (1996, vol. II, 138) rightly upbraids Schopenhauer for this slip.
2 See WWR I, 170–72.
3 "[T]he most profitable and sublime reading that is possible in the world; it has been the consolation of my life and will be that of my death" (PP II, 397).
4 Whether this three-way equation is correct is no doubt debatable; but whether Schopenhauer committed himself to it is not. Nor can it be doubted that it proved influential in certain quarters. See Deussen (1906, 40–46; 226–28), for instance.
5 See the subtitle of James (1981), which was originally published in 1907.
6 Discussion of these figures can be found in Magee (1997).

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Part II

World, Will and Life

6

Schopenhauer's Philosophy of the Dark Origin

WILLIAM DESMOND

1

We so often think of Schopenhauer as a post-Hegelian thinker, and couple him with his successor Nietzsche, that we overlook the fact that Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* (vol. I, 1818) was written at a time very close to Hegel's *Science of Logic* (1812–16). Perhaps we fail to take much notice of this because Schopenhauer only exerted influence well after Hegel's death. More than a mere historical contingency, I find this overlap of philosophical significance. In Hegel a certain rational idealism reaches its culmination and yet the Hegelian hymn to ascendant reason is contemporaneous with the Schopenhauerian descent into a more ultimate darkness prior to reason. Hegel speculatively ascends to thought thinking itself, Schopenhauer philosophically descends to what is other to thought thinking itself, the Will willing itself. Can the ascent of the one be divorced from the descent of the other? Do we still think and live out of the consequences of that ascent and descent? Out of that descent Schopenhauer's philosophy of the dark origin still speaks to us today.

Partly this is due to a skepticism about reason, in some ways initiated in the critique of pure reason by Kant, critique wending its way along more irregular, even nihilistic ways after Kant. Partly it has to do with the over-inflation of claims about reason in Hegelian idealism, which produced the reaction of a long deflation in confidence in reason. Perhaps more importantly, it resides in the sense moderns have of the ethos of being – that is, of a thereness which has no inherent value, the worth of which we have to "create" by "projecting" our value(s) on its otherness, if it is to have any value at all. This devaluation of the ethos of being has its origins in the scientific objectification which extrudes any purpose or final causality from its sanctioned scheme of intelligibility. Instead of the given ethos of being communicating to us traces of inherent value, the world stands over against us as valueless, as all but an alien other. One might even suspect something like Gnostic suggestion in this valueless ethos of being, suggestion

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of something not merely indifferent but hostile to the human being. Rational confidence in the inherent intelligibility of being passes over into suspicion of the bright face of intelligibility. We worry that intelligibility is the mask of something darker and lacking intelligibility in itself. We detect aspects of such a metaphysical attunement, or dissonance, not only in Schopenhauer but in Nietzsche, as well as many other thinkers, too numerous to mention.

Many of these considerations are mingled together in any reflection on the suggestion of a dark origin, but I will mention this last one, namely, the stress on the will as such in Kant and after. Reason is and must be the slave of the passions, Hume said, and Kant's philosophy of the good will, the rational will, sought to testify again this enslavement. Nevertheless, the suspicion of something darker in will than reason seems more persuasive when the eros of endless striving seems more fitting for human beings refusing limits to their own autonomy. Indeed in that endless striving, the human being might seem no longer to passively mirror the devalued thereness of nature as a mere mechanism, but actively to participate in living in an organic nature alive with a darker, sublimer energy.

Philosophers have always been concerned with the search for origins, or the origin: be it the sources or resources of knowing, the sources and grounds of intelligibility, or most extremely, the origin of the "to be" without which nothing determinate would be at all. Some might say that we live in post-metaphysical times, and that such questions belong to a surpassed past, but while particular approaches to such questions might be no longer entirely viable, the questions themselves are elemental and perplexing, and we will never get beyond them finally, even when we essay our best answer. They call forth what for Kant was the ineradicable metaphysical impulse, addressed by perplexities it can neither answer in an entirely definitive way nor put aside as now no longer of consequence. To be blessed – or cursed – with such questions is to be a philosopher and no question about it, Schopenhauer was a philosopher.

That he was such a philosopher needs to reiterated, since attention to his work in the last century has been much dimmed, and to the degree that his star was eclipsed by Nietzsche, his spiritual son. Nietzsche has some responsibility for also eclipsing the above intractable perplexities, especially metaphysical perplexity: his mockery of the metaphysicians (coupled with the heavy Germanic guns of Heidegger, and the perhaps lighter artillery of his French followers) had its desired effect of making thinkers ashamed of the question of origin – ashamed of being philosophers. Of course, if Nietzsche himself had not encountered the bracing inspiration of Schopenhauer it is an interesting (if hypothetical) question as to how he himself might have developed as a philosopher or anti-philosopher. We are often forced to read Schopenhauer in Nietzsche's shadow and we forget the immense influence Schopenhauer had on major artists and leading cultural figures in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century.

Perhaps some may share my experience: I had read Nietzsche extensively before I had studied Schopenhauer intensively. I had been indoctrinated by Nietzsche's self-promotion, repeated endlessly by many of his admirers: when I was a child I put on Schopenhauerian ways, but now that I am a man, I am Nietzsche, the antipode of Schopenhauer – he is pessimist of the great "No," I the herald of the great "Yes!" Yet when I studied Schopenhauer more intensively, I was astonished to discover how he had read Nietzsche so closely! Schopenhauer, the guff bear, had fallen under the spell

of the dancing *Maestro*! I had to rub my eyes to be released from this magic spell. Of course, enchanted by Nietzsche, I was seeing things back to front. In truth, so much of Schopenhauer lies at the back of Nietzsche. Schopenhauerian blood always circulated in the body of Nietzsche, even while a different body grew; strong or sick, Nietzsche remained Schopenhauer's blood brother to the end. Christopher Janaway is right in the main when he says: "Schopenhauer . . . is the system behind Nietzsche's anti-system" (Janaway 1998, 2). The rhetorical brilliance of Nietzsche masks some of these more systematic considerations, and perhaps it is Schopenhauer who rather offers us a needed lucidity on hard issues. Perhaps also Schopenhauer is the more radical and honest about the nihilism that comes with a vision of the whole which proclaims its overall purposelessness.

Schopenhauer's sense of the dark origin is connected with such purposelessness. Will, he holds, is primordial, but the primordial Will has no purpose – it is a blind, insatiable striving. One might say it is a dark self-expressing energy, but there is no point to its striving beyond itself, and this is no point to it all, for there is no point where it comes to an end. Purposeless, it is endless striving that emerges out of darkness, passes through what looks like a space regulated by more rational norms, only to show that the latter are themselves derivatives, and in the end that is no end, the derivatives are overtaken once more by the purposeless striving or futile Will.

This is a bleak vision no doubt, but we must step back from its darkness to see something of the factors inspiring it.

2

Two significant philosophical influences are acknowledged by Schopenhauer, namely Plato and Kant. Schopenhauer offers a peculiar melding of Kantian and Platonic factors: on one side, there is the legacy of a "subjective idealism," on the other side, that of a form of "objective idealism" – since here the Platonic Idea is not just the objectification of the individual will but of the Will itself, considered as an ontological origin. Both Plato and Kant are philosophers in which the powers of *logos* or reason seem to reign supreme. Further what is original is also seen in the light of *logos* or reason. With Plato we make intelligible sense of being by reference to the Ideas, with Kant with reference to reason, whether theoretical reason in the complex synthesis constituting our scientific knowledge of phenomena, or practical reason in its autonomous determination of the moral law, or reason in its regulative projection of Ideas with respect to anticipated totality. Where then in Schopenhauer does the reference to a darker origin of Will come in?

Looking first at the matter with Platonic eyes, one recalls Schopenhauer's view that the principle of sufficient reason is derivative from something more primordial, namely, the Will. As prior to sufficient reason, Will is not exhausted by the terms of reason. Something recalcitrant about Will seems to resist complete rational comprehension. Schopenhauer wrote in the time of the high noon of idealism, but perplexities arise in that noon concerning what is *other* to reason entirely at home with itself. One might say that Schopenhauer returns us to Plato's Cave. But there he, so to say, begins to tunnel below the floor of the Cave, rather than simply climbing up above out of it. The

Platonic Cave is constituted by a mixed interplay of light and darkness. But we are not only in the Cave, we ourselves are a cave, a second underground. More radically still, there is something *subterranean even in that underground*, whether of the first Cave, or of the cave that we ourselves are. There is a more primordial origin than the half and half world of phenomena, the Cave in the first sense, or of ourselves, double creatures of will and representation, the second cave. In fact, in whichever cave we are, Schopenhauer's vision of things is so dark that we are perplexed as to what we can *see at all*. If there is a dark origin more primordial than the half-light, half-darkness of the Cave, or of our own half-light, half-darkness, what at all can we see by the light of its darkness? In that dark vision, or vision of darkness, what can it mean to say there is an underground to the underground Cave? And what would the consequences be of burrowing below its ground?

Think of it this way. Schopenhauer's major work is entitled *The World as Will and Representation*. Will is the thing itself, the original, while representation is its image. If we were to liken the world as representation to Plato's Cave, could we liken Schopenhauer's Will to Plato's Good? Surely we would have to consider the reverse possibility? For Will is no sun, is no good, but a dark original, darker even than the shadow land of representation. If we were to call it a first principle, it is more like another underground, *beneath* the first underground as its origin, not above it as the Good. It is an under-ground beneath us humans also. Can we meaningfully speak any more of what is *above*, above either the "normal" Cave of everyday life, or ourselves as denizens of that Cave? We have to wonder if, long before Nietzsche, Plato is already being reversed here – reversed more radically?

I will come back to the fact that Schopenhauer holds onto the Platonic Idea, and hence seeks to mitigate some of the more extreme consequences that would follow from this line of thinking. That said, the extremity of what follows from Schopenhauer's view is worth re-iterating. For if the representations are shadow images of the Will, then they are not shadows of light; they are not even shadows of shadows; they are shadows of this original darkness. What kind of strange shadow is such a shadow of original darkness? What kind of strange original is this, if its darkness casts shadows only apparently more lightsome than the original itself? To know this thing itself would be to know an original that, in a way, is no original, for it casts less images than vanishing shadows of "itself." Do not these shadows then compound the darkness, not dispel it? What could philosophy – or art or religion – possibly do to dispel the shadows of this impenetrably dark ground under Plato's first underground?

3

Turning now to how Schopenhauer is shadowed by Kant's idealism, his acknowledged debt predominantly centers on Kant's coupling of transcendental ideality and empirical reality. Schopenhauer is (at least initially) a subjective idealist for whom there is no object without a subject. "The world is my representation": Schopenhauer opens his *magnum opus* with this imperious announcement. Showing immense confidence, he claims that everyone will recognize this proposition as true: it is comparable to one of the axioms of Euclid. No object without a subject, for in order for there to be an object

there has to be a subject for whom the object is or appears. The defect of realism is its assertion of an absolutely identical object, totally irrespective of a subject to which it is appearing. The principle seems hard to reject, though much turns on the *meaning of the subject* for whom the object is or appears, and the nature of the *relation between* the subject and it. If initially there seems a confident naïveté about his idealism, his exploration undermines any naïve notion of the subject, for there is an immanent otherness at work in the subject, related to the dark origin, and which erupts as much immanently in the self as externally in the world of nature.

Why here with Schopenhauer do we not get a triumphant subjectivism in which a self-knowing transcendental subjectivity trumpets its epistemological or ontological ultimacy, or something like the self-transparency of Hegelian absolute knowledge? One reason is the Platonic exigency that philosophy "must go back to what is first and original." This "going back" will bring us to more than "subjectivity," back to something like Platonic Ideas, but more importantly to *Will as absolutely original*, Will that is a family relation of Eros, not an overt Kantian concern but certainly crucial for Plato. With this we come back, and in the intimacy of "subjectivity," to an otherness that shatters the pretensions to immediate self-certainty of subjectivity, and certainly blocks the way to anything like the triumph of Hegel's absolute subjectivity. In a way that reminds us a little of Schelling, Schopenhauer explodes idealism from *within*, though he might not put it thus himself. Triumphant subjectivity defeats itself in its triumph over itself. For it discovers that what drives it to master itself is marked by an immanent otherness over which it is not sovereign master.

Wittgenstein remarked that solipsism coincided with realism (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 5.64), and perhaps something analogous happens here. Starting with subjective idealism, Schopenhauer's exploration leads to Will as thing in itself, but this leads to an ontological claim: the nature of original being as Will is read off from the self. If we find here an ontology of subjectivity, we also find an ontology of the inward otherness of selving itself which directs us further to the ontological power of original being. What follows is an explosion, rather implosion, from *within* of subjective idealism: the unruly otherness is within the sovereign idealistic subject. Even more, there is a sense in which the subject is no longer within itself; it too is the effect of the original ground as other to it: given to be, before it gives itself to be, or relates to being other than itself. Schopenhauer does not quite put it like that, but I see here the form of a subject that is *beside itself*. Again I am reminded of the importance of eros (indeed *mania*) in Plato, and will return to this.

Contra Kant, Schopenhauer says we can know the *thing in itself*. Interestingly, he here agrees with Hegel who says even more loudly that the thing in itself is the most easily known. But the difference between them is crucial. In knowing the thing in itself, for Schopenhauer we know the Will, which we cannot absolutely know, in the sense of entirely encapsulating it in a system of concepts. The knowing is first in the intimacy of our own sense of will; then the intimacy of will is known as the energy of a source of being that, as more original than the intellect, can never be mastered by the latter. Something remains beyond, even while acknowledged. The rational concept, while needed, betrays something about the intimate knowing of the will itself. By contrast, when Hegel says we know the thing in itself, he asserts the superiority of thought over any resistant otherness. Thought is just that power that overreaches both itself and its

other; thought can overreach the other because the other is itself nothing but thought, the two are the same. This is just what is denied by Schopenhauer in his doctrine of Will. The Will as the other of thought *is* the other of thought. Instead of the Hegelian overreaching of the other of thought, it is the other way round. It is the dark origin that overreaches thought, for thought is a derivative of this origin, an emergence from a ground beyond thought.

If Will is said to be the primordial metaphysical principle, all being manifests Will. Will is the original source of being to which we have the most direct access through ourselves as will. See this as Schopenhauer's acceptance, with significant revisions, of the so-called Copernican revolution of the transcendental turn. Very strikingly, he reverses the claim that man is a microcosmos and the world a macrocosmos. Rather, we should say that the world itself is a *macranthropos*: the world is, so to speak, man writ large (see WWR II, 642–43). But in turning to the intimacy of the human will, Schopenhauer is catapulted towards the Will as transhuman, and hence, in a kind of immanent summersault, this macranthropomorphism seems reversed. If we ourselves are an underground, we do not find that we are univocally identical with any *inward sun*. Certainly, the more ultimate Will is not at all like Kant's rational good will. One could argue that Will as origin must be dark relative to more determinate forms of cognition; beyond the normal split of subject and object, it is the primordial source out of which plurality and differentiation are subsequently derived. Will is not a determinate rational structure, though it may take form as structured. That Schopenhauer describes it in terms of a blind, goal-less striving says something about the darkness of this primordial origin (see WWR II, 579ff.). This "thing in itself" does not "see." "Seeing" emerges derivatively from a more primordial blindness.

Put somewhat differently: Rational thought is a moment within an original otherness, not as Hegel would have it, the speculative whole within which original otherness becomes a mere moment. Thought thinking itself in Hegelian fashion claims that the whole contains the darkness within itself. Thought thinking its other in Schopenhauerian fashion suggests that it is the darkness of the whole that embraces the frail light of thought within itself. And no matter how expansively this light extends, it will never overreach the darkness, for it is the latter which will always be the more fundamental ground of the former. Of course, we can still ask whether the darkness might be mysterious without being absurd, whether the light might be more enigmatic than our reason can comprehend.

Will as dark origin must externalize itself to come to some self-realization of what is hidden in the initially intimate idiocy of its will to be. There is something idiotic about the origin in Hegel as in Schopenhauer, since in the beginning it does not know itself; its self-becoming is its self-articulation and its pathway to self-knowing, beyond idiocy. Schopenhauer objected to what he took as the excessive anthropomorphizing of cosmic *Geist* by the Hegelians, as if the whole of nature and history simply served the narrow ends of European man at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The darker consequences of his macro-anthropomorphism tell against the rational optimism of the idealistic anthropomorphism. Kant spoke of subreption as projecting on the other what properly belonged oneself, claiming this happens with the sublime. We meet in Schopenhauer another afterlife of Kantian subreption, though one pointing towards distinctly non-Kantian ends. For what belongs to ourselves also turns out to have its own

immanent otherness and we cannot master ourselves in full self-transparency. If there is an immanent sublimity, there is also, as always with the exhilaration of the sublime, the horror. We too are the horror. In itself, in its intimacy in our own inward otherness, the origin remains dark, remains idiotic.

4

One might ask if willing transcends itself in terms of what I would call its idiotic, aesthetic and erotic, and agapeic manifestations.[1] By idiotic I refer (as above) to a certain intimacy of being that is not fully amenable to expression in public generalities. By aesthetic I refer to everything dealing with the sensible and the sensing. By erotic I refer to the self-surpassing movement we meet especially in desire overcoming its own lack. By agapeic, I refer to a self-surpassing towards what is other that is from surplus generosity rather than from a desire that lacks and seeks to fill itself. I have just referred to the idiotic, but clearly there is an aesthetic and erotic manifestation to Will. I will return to the erotic and agapeic, but let me put some flesh on the above considerations by looking at some of Schopenhauer's aesthetic reflections.

These reflections serve to mitigate some of the bleaker aspects of Schopenhauer's views. There is something more than the horror. Again here Schopenhauer appeals to the Platonic Idea in connection with art. Some commentators have suspected incoherence in this appeal, but it is consistent with a desire for some release beyond Will. Will in itself is not a static substance but a dynamic power that objectifies itself at different grades which, he tells us, correspond to different Platonic Ideas. The artwork serves to lift the mind to the contemplation of the Platonic Ideas. Indeed an aesthetic metaphorics suggests itself when we try to understand the objectification of the Will at all. If in itself the Will is idiotic, as I put it, to come to itself, perhaps to know itself, it must express itself, objectify itself. One is tempted to compare this to the artist's need to externalize himself to come to some self-knowing of what is hidden in the initial impulse to create. Prior to creation nothing is known but only a groaning striving. Schopenhauer is not alone in this. Schelling was one of the first to entertain the aesthetic possibilities of Kant's transcendental self-activity. We find some such an aesthetic metaphorics in Hegel's understanding of *Geist.* We find it obviously in the younger Nietzsche, but also in the later, when he refers to the world as a work of art giving birth to itself.[2] In all cases, a turn to the originality and immanent otherness of aesthetic selving is crucial for an interpretation of the process of being as a whole.

Schopenhauer views genius as an instance of exemplary, perhaps original selfhood, and yet something other to original selfhood emerges in immanent consideration of what makes its creativity possible. Like many of the Romantic period, he was also fascinated by the significant proximity of genius and madness (cf. WWR I, § 36; WWR II, ch. 32). This is a theme reminding us of Plato's *Ion*, and the question of the difference of *theia mania* and just mad madness. We meet a startling reversal: beginning with Will as dark origin, art emerges as an end in the process, an end of the striving, for through it the Will's restless striving is stilled. One might say that to understand madness, not to mention genius, one must not be mad, though one might well need a touch of divine madness. On the whole, Schopenhauer's tastes strike one as more soberly classical than

Nietzsche's, closer to Hegel's. Schopenhauer retained a sobriety, mostly. (The mere thought of Hegel did make him lose it – though again, since there is something operatic about his rage against Hegel, one wonders if there was a little hamming going on.)

Kant spoke of genius as that favored one through whom nature supplies the rule to art. Genius is the figure exemplary with respect to aesthetical ideas, those representations of imagination which occasion much thought without, however, any definite thought being entirely adequate to them. Genius stands at the edge of rational articulation in its more rule-bound forms, but the powers of articulation of the genius dip into the dark inarticulate ground of nature. It is nature, after all, pace Kant, that gives the rule to art, through the genius. The genius is intermediary. Kant is as cautious here as Socrates is about Ion's claim to inspiration: the dark origin may not always shine with reasonable light and like nature in disturbance may erupt into the unruly. Kant has a double attitude: genius is necessary for art but it is also necessary to subject genius to rules of decorum and civilized taste.[3] Schopenhauer casts off Kant's caution, and is ready to celebrate genius, especially in his or her *excessive* nature (see WWR II, 376ff.). Genius erupts against a dark background of the chaotic and irrational: this excessive upsurge testifies to the energy of the dark origin, the Will itself, prior to its splitting into subject–object. Genius, it seems, is more *intimate* with the thing itself, Will, unlike the ordinary mortal, the mere empirical subject manipulating phenomenal objects in accord with the principle of sufficient reason.

There is a turnabout here that occasions some astonishment. Will-less knowing emerges, but how can it, since it seems to have to *turn against* the very conditions of its own emergence, namely, Will itself? How can an upsurge of darkness bring light, how can blind energy bring sight? Schopenhauer suggests that the excess of genius shows a *surplus* of intellect and of disinterested contemplativeness. Through this surplus, the genius *sees* the Will in the form of its *universality*, prior to the subject–object split and the dispersion of will into the multiplicity of phenomena. The genius rises above this, or digs below it, to a freer, more composed, more universal comportment. The genius, in this way, is the aesthetic prefigurement of the universal sympathy of the saint. In its excessive manifestation, excessive with respect to ordinary science and everyday pragmatic concerns, Will paradoxically begins to be *liberated from itself*. It begins to wake up to itself, to its own pervasive universality, and indeed to its own final futility. As become self-conscious in the genius, Will, the dark origin, no longer is simply dark to itself. Will drives forward, darkly, blindly; but in the excessive intellect of the genius, it produces an enigmatic reversal of itself into will-less knowing. Pushed further again, this knowing might produce in us the will to self-annihilation, that is, a will to do away with will. The Will that wills itself wills now against itself, wills to be or become will-less.

Again there seems an interesting overlap of Hegel and Schopenhauer in so far as each claims that, despite the darkness of ontological origins, the original "self" *needs to know*. Nietzsche throws a question mark on this need when he wonders if the need for truth is a necessary illusion. Despite the fact that Schopenhauer has been seen as one of the first post-Kantian "irrationalists," there is something quite traditional in his proposing the Platonic Idea as the objective of the desire to know. Less traditionalist, Nietzsche's will-to-power will swallow this eros, and there will be no Platonic Idea: nocturnal desire will engulf diurnal reason. If reason is only instrumental, and in the services of the more primordial Will which is not rational, how can one avoid a final

antithesis between will and intellect? On this way of thinking, intellect is and must always be subordinated to Will. Do we just escape the tyranny of a totalism of abstract reason to fall foul of the tyranny of a totalism of blind will?

The relation of Will and Idea is intimately bound up with the contrast between the genius and the "ordinary" person. The latter is defined by the everyday phenomenal attitude wherein we are both the products and victims of the Will. Products: as embodied beings, we are driven by an insatiable desire which can only be temporarily allayed, only then to sweep onward ever in further dissatisfaction. Victims: because desire erupts in us unbidden, crystallizing us into an ever-renewed dissatisfaction. We are metaphysically doomed to lack and unhappiness. In Schopenhauer's graphic image, we are the beggars who are thrown crumbs for today, only for tomorrow to be hungry again.

We are victims in this further sense: in the phenomenal world desire is driven deterministically, and (the voice of Spinoza breaks through) free will is illusory. By contrast, the artist as genius, as excessive contemplative intellect, somehow escapes this fate: he is free, if only for some few privileged moments (the saint sustains this freedom more fully). He is lifted above the incessant becoming of Will, its ever-renewed lack and restlessness. His intuition of the Idea attains a contemplative composure that yields metaphysical insight into the deepest nature of being, namely the Will itself.

Ideas for Schopenhauer, as was said before, are objectifications of Will itself; hence art as will-less knowledge of Ideas, is only indirectly knowledge of Will itself. Music alone among the individual arts is not knowledge of Idea, but more directly of Will itself. Hence its privileged position in Schopenhauer's aesthetics:

> music is by no means like the other arts, namely a copy of the Ideas, but a *copy of the will itself (Abbild des Willens selbst)*, the objectivity of which are the Ideas. For this reason the effect of music is so very much more powerful and penetrating than is that of the other arts, for these others speak only of the shadow (*Schatten*), but music of the essence (*Wesen*).
> (WWR I, 257)

We tend to feel consolation at remarks like these. But this shows that we have forgotten that the original, the *Wesen* itself, is more radically dark than all the shadows!

We come to this striking tension in Schopenhauer. The artwork gives us metaphysical knowing, and some kind of salvation from Will; yet this knowing ambiguously strains against the very metaphysical conditions of its own possibility, namely Will itself, and indeed precipitates a metaphysical *turning against* this Will. It reveals a metaphysical truth that seems to be *at war with itself in the very peace it claims to offer*. It reveals a metaphysical truth that, from the opposite angle of the same perspective, seems hard entirely to separate from metaphysical absurdity. From this last perspective the final truth is the futility of being. The basis of intelligibility is itself unintelligible. Is the metaphysical knowing Schopenhauer claims for art both the most intelligible and the least intelligible?

5

Appreciating why Plato and Kant are the only philosophical predecessors to whom Schopenhauer confesses a debt, I would now like to indicate another significant overlap

with Plato, one not explicitly exploited by Schopenhauer himself. While Schopenhauer's Will is not Kant's good will, there is a connection with *eros*. The genitals, as he famously said, or shamelessly, are the metaphysical organs and focal point of the Will. Indeed I think we should understand Schopenhauer's dark origin to be a kind of erotic absolute.

Platonic eros, as Diotima tells in the *Symposium*, has one of its sources in lack (*penia*), the other in resource (*poros*). Deficiency is the driving source of desire and will in Schopenhauer. Lack dynamizes the human self into restless search for some satisfying fulfillment or peace. In Plato it is beauty itself (*auto to kalon*) which confers peace and completion on eros. Likewise, direction to the Ideas can stabilize desire's otherwise wavering motion and guide it to fitting ends. Schopenhauer tends to stress lack, and if there is *poros* (resource) to desire, it becomes instrumental to negotiating with the infinite hydra of lack. We do not find the archaic trace of divine festivity that slumbers in the (re)sources of Platonic eros. Schopenhauer's Will reminds us of the horror of being at all. It is better not to be, as Schopenhauer, echoing the tragic wisdom of the Silenus, reiterates. Art is a compensation in the face of this horror.

Schopenhauer's Will tends towards being an *eros turannos*. To my knowledge, no direct significance is invested in something like *eros uranios* (heavenly eros), though one might see his strategies of escaping *eros turannos* as trying to address the misery generated by tyrannical eros. Given this, one can understand how an unrelieved stress on *eros turannos* might well spell the death of the Platonic vision of the higher eros. Of course, Will for Schopenhauer has greater overtones of Romantic, post-Christian inwardness than Plato's eros, but Plato was deeply concerned with limitless desire, revealed for him in the figure of the tyrant. Plato's depiction of the ultimate misery of the tyrant finds significant echoes in Schopenhauer's description of the Will as finally the source of man's ineradicable wretchedness. For Plato the tyrant and his will-to-power were a deformation of desire,[4] not an incarnation of the dark origin, taken as primordial. Thus too beauty for Plato is not the extirpation of desire, but crowns the full unfolding of desire. Here there seem in Schopenhauer continuing, unresolved tensions between Will and Idea. With respect to the release of art, Will as dark origin seems counterposed to a peace "beyond" Will conferred by contemplation of the Idea. But what can this "beyond" be? There seems no "beyond." Beyond the temporary alleviation of the misery Will engenders, there seems no ontological basis for peace, if Will is ultimately a kind of *eros turannos*.

If I am not mistaken one can detect here a silhouette of Nietzsche coming to form out of this tangle of desire. "Nietzschean" desire is multiform, even hydra-like, yet even when it claims to affirm, a bleak dark sap comes up from hidden roots in the secret chaos of the origin. The horror of being at all is deeply hidden down there, in the idiotic recess of our intimate being. Nietzsche too repeated the tragic wisdom of the Silenus: It is better not to be. Unlike Schopenhauerian desire, Nietzschean desire claims to be a defiant, not melancholy rejoinder to the darkness. It says it says "yes," but finally how affirmative is this "yes," if its celebration is inseparable from defiance of darkness? Is it fair to call it whistling in the dark? Of course, different songs can be whistled in the dark, and perhaps not all darks are voids of horror. Perhaps also the idiotics of some forms of intimate being are not revolting but rather marked by love.

What of Schopenhauer's moral doctrine of compassion? Is this marked by an agapeic surplus of generosity for the plight of the other, beyond lack? But it seems that, for Schopenhauer, in identifying with the suffering of the other, it is my own suffering I see in the plight of the other, and hence the bent of compassion circles back to myself. One thinks that perhaps, yes, Schopenhauer's heart is in the right place, but his understanding of compassion only mimics, while lacking any friendship with, or agapeic love of, the other as other. How could this be possible for any will that is the will willing itself?

That said, something about Schopenhauer's bleak vision does have its attractions. There is his phenomenological appreciation of the labyrinth of desire, its insatiable hunger, the bitterness of repeated disappointment. There is his openness, even as an atheist, to some of the originating sources of religions, East and West. We desire salvation but the way of our desire itself blocks salvation. I see a likeness between his Will and Hegel's "bad infinite," but without Hegel's presumptive consolation of completeness attained. When we think we "ought" to be happy, our very craving for happiness guarantees our inevitable unhappiness.

Also attractive is Schopenhauer's preference for music as the metaphysical art *par excellence*. Music sings to the intimate idiocy of the soul. Kant and Hegel opt for poetry as "higher" than music, and thus reflect a different response to the *passio essendi* of human existence, and the nocturnal passion of creative origination. The darkness of the origin resounds in, so to say, the logical silence of music. Music can be more powerful on this score than Kant's "aesthetic ideas" – namely, as occasioning much thought without any definite thought being adequate to it. Nietzsche will concur in privileging the "musical," to the chagrin of the "logocentric" Platonists. Music lets us sing the Will, hear it, heed it, beyond logic. One might ask if the Kantian and Hegelian option for poetry does justice to *poetry as music*: not the prose of origination, subject to conceptual determinability, but its singing speaking, beyond determination and our self-determination?

Once again the relation, indeed balance of Idea and Will is important. Ideas refer us to determinability, but eros and Will refer us to what exceeds determinability, since they express passages of determining power. The Schopenhauerian genius "sees" the Ideas, they are not subjectivistic constructions; we do not determine them, but their form gives form to our otherwise formless striving. There is, I believe, a precarious balance between the creative power of the Schopenhauerian artist and the ontological weight accorded to the Idea. Tilting the balance more towards the creative power of the artist, his successors will identify "Ideas" more with *projections* of genius, indeed, eruptions ("subreptions"?) out the dark origin itself. Nietzsche again comes forcefully to mind. The strong "self" makes the "Idea," he does not find it. There is nothing "eternal," "metaphysical" about "Ideas"; they are secret idealizations of will (to power), and can as equally be deconstructed as constructed. Of course, the strong "self" as secret source is itself also an upsurge or project or "subreption" of will-to-power. It is not released, finally, from the dark origin, now of will-to-power, out of which all comes to be and into which all things pass, as into an ultimately inarticulate night. Not surprisingly, one of the most haunting passages of poetry in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* is Zarathustra's Night Song.

With respect to the Idea, Schopenhauer is a return to Plato (something non-Nietzschean), but he also opens a way, no doubt unintentionally, for the more

thoroughgoing Nietzschean dissolution of Platonism. As an heir of Kant, he is also an influential middle ground between Kant and Nietzsche. For Kant, the Idea is a regulative principle of reason that we project to anticipate totality (Kantian reason: the eros of philosophy pretending eros does not matter). For Plato, the Idea allows eros to be made whole. For Schopenhauer, the Idea is our saviour or escape from eros. For Nietzsche, the Idea is eros falsified and so must be metaphysically unmasked. Schopenhauer would not have endorsed the more extreme consequences of the Nietzschean subversion of Platonism. Remaining something of a Platonist, perhaps he is not entirely antithetical to the Hegel he hated, though instead of Hegel's rational version of the erotic absolute he offers us a willful version.

With respect to some of his significant inheritors, Schopenhauer is perhaps more prescient in at least implicitly drawing attention to the need to balance the originating "self" (here, genius) with the ontological context of origination (here, Will and Idea). Cut loose from ontological moorings, human originality risks mad madness, not divine madness. Of course, one might still charge that the Idea here, finally, cannot be anything other than a consoling gloss on the darkness of the origin. Generally Schopenhauer is admirable in refusing to fake failure as success. But given the ineradicably dark origin, can one affirm *any* possibility of success, aesthetic or otherwise. Nietzsche might revolt against this, dispense entirely with the Platonic Idea, lift "logocentric" restraints on the origin, in an intoxicated outpouring of its Dionysian darkness, but is this not the same darkness again? Does not his revolt again surrender to that against which he revolts? Does not he hide the horror in drawing attention to it? Does not the origin under the ground of the Cave drag all things back into original chaos?

6

When speaking of art's deliverance from the Will, the *eros turannos* of the dark origin, Schopenhauer's language is revealing: art, he says, offers us a *Sabbath* from the penal servitude of the will (cf. WWR I, § 35). My question: Can there be *any* Sabbath here? The original Sabbath recalls the seventh day on which the Creator rested from creation and saw that "It was good, very good." Schopenhauer invokes the Sabbath, but how can we take him at his word? The question arises not from his atheism as such, or indeed some touches of anti-Jewishness in his thought, but with relation to the dark origin. Is it possible *at all* to say "It is good"? Schopenhauer's Will willing itself seems to hold us in the vise of its *eros turannos*. What release can there be? Can there be here any *Sabbath* of the Will, without another sense of eros, another sense of origin, perhaps an agapeic sense?

There is here a family of philosophical possibilities with respect to will as ultimate. One thinks of Kant investing the good will with *unconditional* worth. One thinks of Hegel speaking (in *Philosophy of Right,* § 27) of the "free will that wills the free will." Each thinks that this will is *rational*, but Schelling will claim that will is absolute being, but without the rationalistic consolation of Kant or Hegel. With Schopenhauer's Will there is even less comfort. Nietzsche, surprisingly, comes along here trying to be a comforter: will-to-power finds joy, its ultimate "yes," in its "yes" to itself, but beyond reason, and morality.

Here and there Hegel refers to the notion of God as "love disporting with itself," and one is made to wonder if Schopenhauer's dark origin as an *eros turannos* is also a "love disporting with itself." Insatiably insistent, it seems to be contracted on its own self-seeking, and finally it seems alone with itself and nothing but itself. Hegel's God disports with itself by playing with the whole world, nature and history; seeking to be at one with itself, reconciled with itself. One suspects there is more honesty in Schopenhauer about this "God" that disports with itself. Honesty, because the good God has flipped into its opposite and shows a face more like the *evil genius* disporting with itself. One thinks of Schopenhauer's response to Spinoza's *Deus sive natura*. God may be an honorific name to offer to nature, but there is something dishonorable in the Spinozistic formulation. Big fish eat little fish, Spinoza and Schopenhauer would agree, but to throw flies to spiders and to laugh with glee, as his first biographer Colerus told us that Spinoza did for fun, this Schopenhauer could not stomach (cf. PP I, 73). St. Augustine tells us of his own watching of a lizard or spider catch flies (*Confessions*, 10, 35) but his response is quite different to Spinoza's glee: praise of God displaces the concupiscence of curiosity and of the eye.

One is reminded of the blinded, comfortless Gloucester in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (IV, 1, 36–37) who cries out: "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport." Gloucester *sees* in his blindness. If Schopenhauer's Will as dark origin has some family resemblance to the evil genius, is it too like a wanton god whose disporting with himself is staged in the horrors of nature and history. Hegel talks piously of nature and history as God's two temples, but if these two were "objectifications" of the dark origin they would not be temples but charnel houses and torture chambers. The logic of an *eros turannos* with no immanent good in it is more forthrightly shoved in our faces by Schopenhauer. Again one is forced to ask: Can Schopenhauer's Will willing itself ever be released to any Sabbatical "It is good."

Aristotle spoke of tragedy evoking terror and pity, or horror and compassion. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are strong on horror, but equivocal on compassion. Schopenhauer's saving release in face of the horror of Will might be called an "aesthetic compassion," even though the origin cannot source an "It is good." Nietzsche is more tempted by pity, not only for us, but for the dark god of tragedy. That god too cannot say "It is good," but Nietzsche in his pity will say "It is good," for him. Nietzsche shows us horror, and warns against pity, yet he shows "pity" (or its surrogate) in the comfort of his "yes." Schopenhauer shows us horror, and enjoins pity, yet he is often pitiless.

Does art too begin to look like the sport of the wanton god? Our willing blithely builds its crystal palaces. Then it finds itself miserable in them. Then again it proceeds to destroy them. Then once more it proceeds to repeat its futile building. Thus will comes to itself in its creations as finally *nothing*. The active lack that drives it to being, that drives its "to be," is everything and nothing. There is no plenitude of glorious being in itself; no glory of existence communicated to the other in the release of the creation. The drive from will to something other is only a *quasi-move*. It is a drive from lack to nothing. What is in-between is the vanishing medium of its own self-deluding willing of itself. Schopenhauer's Will as an erotic origin is the dark mirror – or image in reverse – of the self-certain, self-mediating reason of Hegel's absolute. But were "full" self-knowledge of this Will to hit us, we would be hit with absolute "emptiness" and we would struggle to stifle the cry of horror.

Is there something more honest than Hegel when Schopenhauer, so to say, reverses Leibniz, and now this world seems the "worst possible"? If the evil genius holds sway rather than the good God, no wonder it is "better not to be." Can art and the holy release us to an "It is good"? The honest answer on these terms must be "No." The only release is an escape from the "It is" – the "It is" as evil. There is no Sabbath. The release of art and the holy cannot bring us to life or towards life as worthy. They can only turn us away from it as unworthy of affirmation.

The matter is not merely of historical interest, for we have as much difficulty now, as then, in saying "It is good." In fact, we seem more comprehensively deprived of a Sabbath than ever, in a world defined by the dominion of serviceable disposability.[5] There everything is a means, and nothing an end, and art seems to place itself in servitude to that dominion, servitude less penal now as too well paid. We do live culturally and philosophically with something like Schopenhauer's legacy, its continuing influence, especially as transmitted through Nietzsche in regard to art and the "beyond" of reason. Schopenhauer's suspicious anti-Hegelianism also makes him our contemporary, but must we, can we, choose between the Schopenhauerian and Nietzschean reversals of optimistic idealism? The first tends towards resignation, awaiting a change of being reminiscent of a gift of grace; the second commands an intensification, not abnegation, of self-affirming will, of the will willing itself. The darkness of the original Will remains ultimately *dark for both*, regardless of whether the transfiguration is renunciation of eros or intensification. In the light, or darkness, of this origin, it is the *similarity* of renunciation and intensification that strikes one. Whether one says "yes," or "no," this dark origin remains thus dark.

Shadows of something like Schopenhauer's dark origin have had afterlives into more recent times. I think of André Breton's *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* in which he recommends the "vertiginous inner descent" and the "ceaseless promenade in full forbidden zone" (Breton 1988, 791). I think of absurdist existentialism and the literature of the absurd. Quite Schopenhauerian also are some of the presuppositions of psychoanalytic thought, reminding us of the tyranny of the original eros, and the ceaseless seeking and dissatisfaction of the libido. Postmodernist thought, in its Nietzschean variety, suggest a skeptical, *ironical* version of Schopenhauerian pessimism, secretly, or not so secretly, conscious of its own final futility. Oddly enough, the ethical Levinas comes to mind in thinking of Schopenhauer's dark origin. Levinas reiterates, not only the horror of the *il y a*, but the *evil of being* ("le mal de l'être," as he puts it in *Existence and Existents*) (Levinas 1947, 19) in the relentless self-insistence of the *conatus essendi*. Interestingly too, Plato's Good beyond being helps Levinas escape *le mal de l'être*.

Whether our faith is modernist or postmodernist, we stand in the shadow of the too-forgotten Schopenhauer, recessing many of his metaphysical assumptions which no amount of talk being "post-metaphysical" can completely hide. We are still burrowing under the ground of the Cave and there seems no light at the end of the tunnel. How now come up again, and walk on the earth and look up anew at the heavens? We are less candid than Schopenhauer in confessing the ruses by which we protect ourselves from the darkness of the origin. We do not ask with the urgency required whether there is a constancy of intelligibility which gives some stability and direction to the eros of our being, whether there an eros other than tyrannical will, whether there is an ontological worth to the "to be" which communicates confidence to our own service

of the good. The somber outcome of Schopenhauer's philosophy of the dark origin reawakens us to these elemental perplexities. He carried through a line of thought which many successors continued, even while they thought they were beginning a new line with the "yes" and "no," the plus and negative signs exchanged. If the dark origin is the principle of the whole, then any reversal between "yes" and "no," plus and negative, while seeming to free us from that origin's tyranny, takes place within its embrace, and will inevitably be swallowed again by its darkness. One must ask if we have often only arrived back at this starting point, where our end is Schopenhauer's beginning. We must not fool ourselves that we have made a move from darkness to light when we have only made a quasi-move, and have only come full circle from darkness to darkness.

See also 16 Schopenhauer on the Metaphysics of Art and Morality; 18 Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy; 19 Life-Denial versus Life-Affirmation: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Pessimism and Asceticism; 23 Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner; 25 Schopenhauer's Fairy Tale about Fichte: The Origin of *The World as Will and Representation* in German Idealism.

Notes

1 See Desmond (1995, ch. 10) on idiotic, aesthetic, erotic and agapeic selving.
2 On this theme in Schopenhauer and others see Desmond (2003). I draw here on some of ideas in chapter 4: "Art's Release and the Sabbath of the Will: Schopenhauer and the *Eros Turranos* of Origin." The reference to Nietzsche's world as work of art giving birth to itself is Nietzsche (1969, § 796).
3 On this see chapter 2 of Desmond (2003). In chapter 1, I address the issue of *theia mania* in Plato.
4 See Desmond (2004).
5 See Desmond (2001, ch. 14); see also Desmond (2005).

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7

The Consistency of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics

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Allegations of inconsistency have haunted Schopenhauer's philosophy since the earliest reviews of his *magnum opus*, *The World as Will and Representation*. Given Schopenhauer's acknowledged penchant for investigating particular issues independently of each other, it can scarcely be denied that he sometimes gives rather severe provocation for these charges. Nevertheless, Schopenhauer maintains that he has penetrated into the kernel of the world and that the unity and agreement of his tenets have always appeared subsequently of themselves.

Recent years have evinced a marked resurgence of interest in Schopenhauer scholarship. Yet even the better-reasoned secondary literature reveals a continued tendency to interpret his philosophy along lines that would render his thought painfully inconsistent. In the pages that follow, I will highlight the major indictments of the controversy and argue that a careful reading of the text will reveal that Schopenhauer is, indeed, internally consistent.

1. The Miracle "Par Excellence"

Schopenhauer analyzes consciousness directly in terms of the relationship between knower and thing known. In *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, we are informed: "Our knowing consciousness . . . is divisible into subject and object and contains nothing else. To be object for the subject and to be our representation or mental picture are the same thing. All our representations are objects of the subject, and all objects of the subject are our representations" (FR, 41–42). The representations which constitute the realm of experience stand together in a natural and regular connection as determined by the principle of sufficient reason. This principle has four fundamental forms which regulate the four types of human knowledge. A "systematic

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arrangement" of the fourfold root of sufficient reason would include: (1) "the principle of the ground or reason of being," (2) "the law of causality," (3) the law of "motivation," and (4) "the principle of sufficient reason or ground of knowing" (FR, 221). This schema effectively constitutes Schopenhauer's adaptation of Kant's transcendental idealism: knowledge is conditioned by the *a priori* forms which the subject enjoins upon experience. With regard to the empirical realm, Schopenhauer's epistemology remains decidedly Kantian. Yet regarding knowledge of the conscious subject itself, Schopenhauer departs from the path of his epistemological progenitor. Specifically, Schopenhauer provides that the law of "motivation" constitutes the condition by which the conscious subject gains self-knowledge. This form subsumes only one object as a member: "the immediate object of the inner sense, *the subject of willing,* which is object for the knowing subject" (FR, 207).

Even this form of self-awareness exhibits the division between subject and object and Schopenhauer thus concedes a virtual distinction between the subject of knowing and the subject of willing. It is immediately and intuitively obvious that the intellect which knows and the will which is known coalesce into the "consciousness of an I" (WWR II, 207). Yet regardless of the irrefutable identification of knower and willer, this nexus itself cannot be technically *known*. It is, instead, immediately apprehended as the inexplicable *Weltknoten*, the "miracle 'par excellence'" (FR, 211–12).

The individual dwells in the world and is united with a body. The world which is the representation of the knowing subject is presented through the medium of that body and its affections are "the starting point for the understanding in its perception of the world" (WWR I, 99). For the pure subject of knowing, the physical body is a representation just like any other. The movements of this body are perceived in the same way as the physical alterations of other objects, and as such, "would be equally strange and incomprehensible to him, if their meaning were not unraveled for him in an entirely different way" (WWR I, 99). But the subject is granted a unique perspective from which to glimpse the true inner nature of his being through the occurrence of bodily agency. The knowing subject appears as an individual only through his identity with the body, yet this body is presented in two entirely different ways: "It is given in intelligent perception as representation, as an object among objects, liable to the laws of these objects. But it is also given in quite a different way, namely as what is known immediately to everyone, and is denoted by the world *will*" (WWR I, 100). Thus,

> Every true act of his will is also at once and inevitably a movement of his body; he cannot actually will the act without at the same time being aware that it appears as a movement of the body. The act of will and the action of the body are not two different states objectively known, connected by the bond of causality; they do not stand in the relation of cause and effect, but are one and the same thing though given in two entirely different ways, first quite directly, and then in perception for the understanding. The action of the body is nothing but the act of will objectified, i.e., translated into perception.
>
> (WWR I, 100)

Kant insisted that concepts which have not been drawn from a perception in space and time are empty. Since perception furnishes only phenomena, there can be no knowledge of the thing-in-itself. Yet Schopenhauer counters that the knowledge which everyone has of their own willing is neither a perception, nor empty, but is more real

than any other knowledge. Indeed, *willing* is the only avenue of comprehending simultaneously from within any act that outwardly manifests itself; "it is the one thing known to us *immediately*, and not given merely in the [form of] representation" (WWR II, 196). The moment and act of deliberate bodily agency thus serves as "the datum alone capable of becoming the key to everything else, . . . the only narrow gateway to truth" (WWR II, 196).

All of this is ostensibly quite disconcerting. One the one hand, Schopenhauer is quite adamant that there can be no knowledge without representation. Phenomena are merely object for the subject, and even consciousness itself presupposes the bifurcation between subject and object. Yet, on the other hand, Schopenhauer claims to have unearthed a subterranean passage by which the knowing subject can peer through the "veil of Maya" and examine his true inner being – the noumenon. But given such premises, how can the noumenon be known? The thing-in-itself supposedly lies beyond the pale of representation. If the noumenon were *known*, it would have to be known as representation and, *ipso facto*, would not be known precisely as thing-in-itself.

A large number of commentators (Janaway 1989, 192–93; Copleston 1947, 64–65; Hamlyn 1980, 83–85; and Young 1987, 17–33) have seized this opportunity to argue that Schopenhauer is simply inconsistent. Copleston's attack is academically typical, but perhaps unique in its vehemence:

> It is really very difficult to see how, after laying down his theory of knowledge and his doctrine of the phenomenon, Schopenhauer can give any satisfactory justification for a metaphysic. Either all knowledge is knowledge of the phenomenal, in which case there can be no knowledge . . . of the noumenal, or there can be knowledge of the noumenal, in which case knowledge is not essentially knowledge of the phenomenal.
>
> (Copleston 1947, 64–65)

Schopenhauer might quickly respond that this allegation is merely a false dilemma and that his position is simple and straightforward: The conscious ego – taken as subject of knowledge – knows *itself* as will. Through an inward observation of deliberate bodily movement, the knowing subject again recognizes *itself* as will directly manifest in representation. Hence, the individual engaged in the introspective analysis of bodily agency recognizes that the ego remains numerically intact and is at once: (i) the subject of knowledge, (ii) the subject of volition, (iii) will, and (iv) representation. It thus exists as a microcosm of the world; the inner gateway to truth.

2. The Nature of the Noumenon

If Schopenhauer has indeed gained access to the noumenon, what *exactly* has he discovered? At times, he appears adamant that the thing-in-itself is precisely *will*. Elsewhere, he seems to suggest that the innermost being of the world is simply "called" will after its most immediate objectification. It is in any case clear that the term "will" as applied by Schopenhauer to describe the thing-in-itself cannot be understood in the ordinary language sense of a human will guided by knowledge. What then is the true nature of the thing-in-itself?

Magee (1983, 143–44) contends that Schopenhauer could neither have been more explicit, nor more repetitive, in his insistence that the noumenon "is not conative at all but is through and through non-human and impersonal, without consciousness, . . . without aim and . . . without life." Yet by designating the word "will" to denote the thing-in-itself, Schopenhauer has made inevitable the misunderstandings he seeks to ward off. Worse yet:

> The most grievous thing of all is that this is wholly unnecessary. Any innocuous name would have avoided it. The term 'force' rejected by him would have been vastly preferable. 'Energy' would have been better still. . . . Ever since he wrote, Schopenhauer has been widely regarded as saying that the will in *something akin to the ordinary sense of the word* is the noumenon.
>
> (Magee 1983, 144)

Young (1987, 65), to the contrary, rejects Magee's attempt to sanitize the word "will": "Schopenhauer *insists* on the startling, challenging, 'paradoxical' character of his metaphysics of will, and this quality . . . depends, in fact, precisely on its being will in 'something akin to' the usual sense that is claimed to permeate the whole of nature." As such, "we have no reason for, and good reason against, the thesis that the main work ought to be re-titled 'The World as Energy and Representation'" (Young 1987, 66).

While discussing the apparent teleology of nature, however, Young declares that the standard role the term "will" plays in the explanation of behavior is to function in "rationalizations": "Normally, that is to mention a desire in the course of explaining an item of behavior is to indicate what was the point the agent saw in doing it" (Young 1987, 71). Young concludes, therefore, that the will which Schopenhauer extends through nature can be "blind" only if the explanations in which it is involved are always of the non-rationalizing kind. But this is not the case. Thus, Young contends that it is really "both will and intelligence, agency in the full-blooded sense, that Schopenhauer extends throughout nature we confront" (Young 1987, 72).

In short synopsis, Magee insists that Schopenhauer's noumenon is not truly a will at all. Young countermands that Schopenhauer's will is really an extension of intelligent agency. The question stands: what is the nature of the thing-in-itself?

Schopenhauer's response is, again, perfectly clear. The introspective analysis of bodily agency divulges a direct apprehension of will. Nevertheless, because human cognition is conditioned by the principle of sufficient reason, the subject cannot experience the will precisely as it is *in itself*: "In consequence of the form of time which still adheres to it, everyone knows his *will* only in successive individual *acts*, not as a whole, in and by itself" (WWR II, 197). Still, "in the case of every emergence of an act of will from the obscure depths of our inner being into the knowing consciousness, there occurs a direct transition into the phenomenon that lies outside time" and the instant and act of bodily agency marks "the point where the thing-in-itself enters the phenomenon most immediately" (WWR II, 197). Now, if the noumenon – considered precisely *in itself* – eludes cognitive grasp, how is it to be treated? We must borrow the name from some object, "from something in some way objectively given" (WWR I, 110). In order to serve properly as a point of explanation, this object "can be none other than the most complete of all its phenomena; i.e., the most distinct, the most developed, the most directly enlightened by knowledge; but this is precisely man's *will*" (WWR I, 110).

"Here of course," Schopenhauer explains, "we use only a *denominatio a potiori,* by which the concept of will therefore receives a greater extension than it has hitherto had" (WWR I, 111). Because Schopenhauer was the first to equate "the inner essence of any striving and operating force of nature with . . . will" (WWR I, 111), different species of the same genus were not recognized to be homogenous. "Consequently, no word could exist to describe the concept of this genus" (WWR I, 111), and Schopenhauer is led to "name the genus after its most important species" – the human will (WWR I, 111).

> But anyone who is incapable of carrying out the required extension of the concept will remain involved in a permanent misunderstanding. For by the word *will*, he will only understand that species of it hitherto exclusively described by the term, that is to say the will guided by knowledge, strictly according to motives, thus manifesting itself under the guidance of the faculty of reason. This, as we have said, is only the most distinct of phenomena or appearance of the will . . . From the opposite point of view, I should be misunderstood by anyone who thought that ultimately it was all the same whether we expressed this essence-in-itself of all phenomena by the word will or by any other word. This would be the case if the thing-in-itself were something whose existence we merely *inferred*, and thus knew only indirectly and merely in the abstract. Then certainly we could call it what we liked; the name would stand merely as the symbol of an unknown quantity. But . . . the concept of *will* is of all possible concepts the only one that has its origin *not* in the phenomena, *not* in the mere representation of perception; but which comes from within, and proceeds from the most immediate consciousness of everyone.
>
> (WWR I, 111–12)

In fine, the thing-in-itself is *will*. But the extension of the term will must be broadened to include *every force in nature*: the force that manifests itself as matter; the energy that forms crystals and accounts for gravity; the power that turns the compass north; and the surge that stirs and stimulates life, thus engendering a will to live and reproduce. Yet the will taken purely in itself, is only a blind, irresistible urge. It is only through "the addition of the world as representation [that] . . . the will obtains knowledge of its own willing and what it wills" (WWR I, 275). Even though the will manifests itself through various grades of objectivity which seemingly approximate teleological design at the higher levels, in its base essence, it is merely an obscure dull urge, blind impulse, endless striving, untargeted want.

3. The Principle of Perceptual Verifiability

Schopenhauer has a discerning and carefully constructed philosophy of language. In briefest form, he maintains that language is comprised of words signifying concepts and that concepts, in turn, must have a basis in perception. An essential tenet of this theory is the principle of perceptual verifiability: "concepts must be verifiable against perception as well as drawn from it" (White 1992, 91) and "all *prima facie* concepts that are not derived from experience are not in the end concepts at all; they are meaningless, empty" (White 1992, 91). The two sources of concepts, empirical *a posteriori* perception and pure *a priori* perception, are exhibited to the knowing subject within phenomenal

boundaries, subject to the principle of sufficient reason. Yet Schopenhauer claims to have pierced the veil of representation and to have revealed the nature of the noumenon. If meaningful language must be backed by experience, and experience itself is possible only by virtue of the principle of sufficient reason, how can Schopenhauer express the nature of the thing-in-itself without violating his own principle of perceptual verifiability?

White (1992, 4) states the problem concisely:

> Schopenhauer holds that everything intelligible . . . is a creation of our own minds. But if this is so, then on the assumption that there is a noumenon, it is *eo ipso* unintelligible: no principles of explanation can be applied to it; nothing can be said relating it to other things . . . More radically still, nothing meaningful can be said of it, at any rate in ordinary language, since the concepts expressed in ordinary language are drawn from the everyday world.

This is no small matter: "It looks as if Schopenhauer must abandon his theory of knowledge and concepts, or abandon his claims to reveal the nature of the noumenon" (White 1992, 91). Under either alternative, Schopenhauer's program would be undermined. Yet White also proffers a possible means of escape: that Schopenhauer's talk of the thing-in-itself be construed as metaphorical. In this fashion, the concept of will would be derived from inner perception and thus be genuinely *verified* by perception. While the term will would not license literal talk of the noumenon, since the thing-in-itself is imperceptible, it could be applied to it metaphorically.

White concedes that this proposal cannot help if metaphorical terms are always directly translatable into literal concepts. This would solve nothing since the literal terms of translation could be substituted for the metaphor and applied to the thing-in-itself. But if metaphorical terms are not always translatable into literal substitutes, Schopenhauer's position could withstand close scrutiny.

White does not pursue the matter further and is led to conclude that Schopenhauer is simply inconsistent (White 1992, 128). Yet better-reasoned accounts of metaphor support White's initial exculpatory conjecture: true metaphors are *not* directly translatable into literal terms and exist as unique cognitive agents enabling one to express things that can be said in no other way.

While scores of volumes have been devoted to the task of deciphering the logical form and grammatical function of metaphor, Incremental accounts have attracted the most recent and widespread attention. Incremental theories maintain that the metaphor fills "lexical gaps" by designating that which would otherwise have no name. The metaphor is viewed as active in the extension of understanding and serves as a fully cognitive vehicle which allows the expression of insight which cannot be conveyed through literal, denotative language. In such cases, the subject which the metaphor describes can *only* be identified by means of the metaphor. Thus, the metaphor is genuinely creative and engenders the expression of new, unique, and non-literal insight.

Under the Incrementalist interpretation, model and metaphor are closely linked. When we employ a model, we regard one item or state of affairs in terms of another; when we utilize a metaphor, we speak of one thing or state suggestive of another (Soskice 1985, 50–51).

In short order, Schopenhauer employs the individual human will (for reasons cited throughout) as a model. By utilizing this model, and by extending the reach of the term "will" to include non-rational, impersonal forces, Schopenhauer creates a metaphor capable of conveying genuine insight which could be fully expressed in no other way. The term will, thus extended, expands our lexicon and conceptual apparatus. The will serves as a means of interpreting the world; it invites fresh avenues of comprehension, establishes the parameters of speculation, and produces a unique and encompassing philosophical paradigm.

4. The Platonic Forms

In § 25 of the first volume of his main work, Schopenhauer introduces his incorporation of the Platonic Forms. The Forms are seen primarily as grades of objectification of will which account for the diversification of natural species. Thus, for example, we encounter a higher grade of objectification in the human than in the animal, and a higher grade in the animal than in the plant. Yet the mechanics of the Forms are advanced further to claim a pivotal function in Schopenhauer's entire explanatory framework. They are involved in Schopenhauer's discussion of metaphysics, epistemology, nature, aesthetics, mysticism and science.

There has been more ink spilled and more controversy introduced by Schopenhauer's adaptation of the Platonic Forms than perhaps any other tenet of his philosophy. One need only wade into the secondary literature to discover a cornucopia of criticisms registered. The most damaging critique is that Schopenhauer's employment of the Forms is unnecessary and inconsistent with the remainder of his philosophical program. While numerous commentators (Magee 1983, 239; Hamlyn 1980, 121; Fox 1980, 149) commit to this claim, Fox's account is among the most damning:

> Schopenhauer's introduction of Platonic Ideas into his metaphysics seems arbitrary at best; it is one of the ingredients of his thought that strikes me as least satisfactory, and is to a large degree responsible for giving his system the appearance of being a hybrid that suffers from an inexcusably careless job of grafting. The Platonic Ideas would surely be the first casualty of Occam's Razor, were it applied with any vigor at all to Schopenhauer's system.
>
> (Fox 1980, 149)

To counter this concern, it is incumbent to begin by understanding Schopenhauer's conception of the relationship between philosophy and science. Science, Schopenhauer contends, is relegated to the study of the relationship of phenomena to one another as bound by the principle of sufficient reason. As such, "[e]very explanation of natural science must ultimately stop at . . . a *qualitas occulta* and thus at something wholly obscure" (WWR I, 80). The reach of philosophy, however, is entirely different. Philosophy presupposes absolutely nothing as known: neither the phenomena, the relations between the phenomena, nor even "the principle of sufficient reason itself, to which the other sciences are content to refer everything" (WWR I, 81). Accordingly, the task of Schopenhauer's philosophy, in pertinent part, is to complete the scientific account of

the world. At the precise point where science has exhausted its scope of explanation, philosophy assumes the banner cry and considers things in accordance with its *own* method. Schopenhauer's enterprise does not attempt to annunciate "*whence* or *for what purpose* the world exists, but merely *what* the world is" (WWR I, 82) and the object of that enquiry is intimately already known by everyone "for he himself is the subject of knowing of which the world is representation" (WWR I, 82). By experiencing ourselves as will manifest in representation, we simultaneously experience and understand the essence of all natural forces (*qualitates occultae*) and indeed, the whole of the world. The task of philosophy is to reproduce this *feeling* (apprehension, perception) in the abstract; to raise it, insofar as possible, to rational knowledge.

Schopenhauer's enterprise seeks to complete the scientific image of the world; not to compete with it. His philosophy grasps *meaning*, rather than causal (scientific) explanations. Hence, when he introduces the Forms into his metaphysics, it is in effort to extract and decipher the will's mode of objectification in phenomena, and to describe the manifestation of natural forces in a format unavailable to the sciences. Without the Ideas, Schopenhauer could not have rendered a complete understanding of the world.

5. Mysticism

Mysticism is a recurrent theme in Schopenhauer's thought. Yet his treatment of mysticism appears ambiguous. In *Parerga and Paralipomena*, for instance, he acknowledges "the sphere of illuminism as something that exists" and to which, presumably, one might appeal as a source of insight, but he is nevertheless insistent that he has "guarded against setting even one foot" on the mystic's terrain (PP II, 10). Schopenhauer's treatment of such important issues as non-conceptual intuitive knowledge, aesthetic contemplation, and the foundation of morality, suggest that he may have tread much further into the mystic's domain than he is willing to admit. Thus, in his *opus*, *On the Basis of Morality*, Schopenhauer argues that moral action arises from the mystical insight that all phenomenal beings share the same noumenal essence: "It is practical mysticism insofar as it ultimately springs from the same knowledge that constitutes the essence of all mysticism proper. In no other way can it be truly explained" (BM, 212).

Is Schopenhauer inconsistent? Or is there some means of discernment by which to exonerate Schopenhauer of this charge? While nearly all of the major commentaries acknowledge the mystical elements in Schopenhauer's thought, only a few secondary sources (Gardiner 1963, 298–300; Young 1987, 33–35; Weiner 1992, 104, 129 n. 94; and Atwell 1995, 114, 126–28, 171) have struggled with Schopenhauer's apparent ambiguity on the subject. A thorough examination of the various contexts in which Schopenhauer discusses mysticism will reveal, however, that he is not internally inconsistent.

Schopenhauer is adamant that the *philosopher* must begin with a consideration of the world itself. Knowledge of the empirical world is derived from experience of physical objects: "*intuitive, perceptive, complete, empirical* representations" (FR, 45). Because our intellect is immanent, philosophy too must remain immanent and should not aspire to "supramundane" concerns which lie quite beyond the proper ken of philosophy.

Concepts alternatively are *abstract* representations. While both animals and humans possess understanding, and are thus capable of generating intuitive representations, only humans possess the faculty of reason necessary to produce concepts. More pointedly, concepts subsume "innumerable things under their grasp" and function as "*complex or comprehensive totalit*[*ies*]" (FR, 146). Concepts "can also be defined as *representations from representations*" (FR, 146). Since "[t]he formation of a concept is brought about generally by dropping much that is given in intuitive perception," the concept is essentially "a case of thinking less than what is intuitively perceived" (FR, 146–47).

While representations of perception constitute the fountain head of philosophy, such perceptions can neither be retained nor communicated. Only concepts, properly drawn, are unconditionally communicable. Concepts enter consciousness only in the form of words. Words, in turn, fix, signify, and express concepts and render speech and language possible.

Schopenhauer's philosophy of language and concomitant demand for the perceptual verifiability of concepts provide the armament by which to seize and eliminate pseudo-concepts and nonsensical utterances. Because concepts derive all meaning from their ultimate reference to representations of perception, it necessarily follows that alleged concepts that are not so grounded are essentially meaningless, and the words which signify them are merely empty husks. Philosophers who trade in such vacuous expressions ineluctably utter nonsense.

Schopenhauer is insistent: philosophy must begin with an examination of the world presented in intuitive perception and through means of natural faculties which apprehend that world. Philosophy cannot arise from a morass of empty concepts, nor can knowledge be derived from supersensuous capacities which supposedly fathom "the Absolute." But this does not mean that everything that is known can be readily expressed. To this extent, Schopenhauer appeals to a type of knowledge that might well be deemed "mystical" (Wittgenstein 1961, § 6.522; 7). Schopenhauer contends that only abstract conceptual knowledge can be confined by the limited stricture of words. Intuitive knowledge, conversely, can be shown, but not always articulately stated. While the philosopher can attempt to communicate intuitive knowledge by transposing it into the abstract medium of concepts and words, the unique insights of intuitive knowledge may defy easy translation. Thus, for example, "[t]he understanding alone knows from perception, directly and completely, the mode of operation of a lever, a block and tackle, a cog-wheel, the support of an arch, and so on" (WWR I, 53). Likewise, an experienced billiard player can possess a perfect knowledge of the laws governing the impact of bodies, although such knowledge remains solely in the understanding and merely for immediate perception. In fact, in activities such as "billiards-playing, fencing, tuning an instrument, or singing, knowledge of perception must directly guide activity" (WWR I, 56); the employment of abstract reason will merely prove a hindrance.

Schopenhauer's *genius* must likewise begin with perception. The genius encounters an aspect of being which can neither be quickly understood by the ordinary person, nor become readily molded into the narrow confines of ordinary language. Through aesthetic contemplation, the genius comes to behold the Platonic Forms.

Apprehension of the Forms can only come about by a change in the subject. A curious transformation occurs in rare individuals in which knowledge suddenly tears

itself away from the service of the will. The subject, no longer bound by the principle of sufficient reason, ceases to exist as an individual and becomes "a pure will-less subject of knowledge" (WWR I, 178). The entire power of the mind becomes devoted to will-less perception as the subject merges with the object: "we lose ourselves entirely in this object . . . we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist only as pure subject . . . so that it is though the object alone existed" (WWR I, 178). When the object of contemplation has transcended all external relation, and the subject has temporarily broken the bondage of the will, what is known is no longer the individual thing, but the Platonic Idea to which it corresponds. Thus, in one stroke, the object of contemplation becomes "the Idea of its species" (WWR I, 179) and the subject becomes the "*one* eye of the world" (WWR I, 198); "the *pure subject of knowing*" (WWR I, 179).

Language is the medium of philosophy; art is the vehicle of genius. Indeed, the very purpose of art is to communicate knowledge of the Ideas. Art can be defined as "*the way of considering things independently of the principle of sufficient reason*" (WWR I, 185). Thus, while linguistic communication is necessarily conceptual, and concepts can merely reiterate the testimony of the senses (subject entirely to the principle of sufficient reason) it remains for art to effectively communicate the insight of the genius. The distinction between the concept and the Idea, in this regard, is apparent:

> The *concept* is abstract, discursive . . . attainable and intelligible only by him who has the faculty of reason, communicable by words . . . The *Idea*, on the other hand, definable perhaps as the adequate representative of the concept, is absolutely perceptive, and, although representing an infinite number of individual things, is yet thoroughly definite. It is never known by the individual as such, but only by him who has raised himself above all willing and all individuality to the pure subject of knowing.
>
> (WWR I, 234)

Both the philosopher and the genius remain wedded to perception: the inner essence of every genuine piece of knowledge. Perhaps without surprise, we learn in the fourth book of the main work that even virtue stems from knowledge of perception. Schopenhauer's discussion of the *saint* affirms the same immanence as in all that has been considered before. Schopenhauer holds that the foundation of morality is the recognition that all phenomenal beings are manifestations of a single noumenal entity.

Only when a motive springs from compassion does it possess true moral value. It is the insight into the essence of the world which enables the individual to recognize the noumenal identity of himself with others. Upon reaching this state of virtue, the enlightened one can no longer watch with disinterest the suffering of others, as he understands their sorrow as his own.

Piercing the "veil of Maya" is not without benefit: knowledge of the nature of the thing-in-itself provides a balm to all willing. The bitter acrimony of this worst of all possible worlds can be deprived of its bite to the extent that one can effect a renunciation of the phenomenal world. The pinnacle of worldly and self denial occurs through the transition from virtue to asceticism. The virtuous person practices moral vigil and seeks to be ever-mindful of the vanity of all existence. However, still beckoned by the will's powerful influence, the illusion and allure of phenomena is likely to ensnare him again.

The ascetic saint, however, has affected a complete denial of his own nature and of the will itself. Through unending self-denial, the holy ascetic turns the will upon itself

and may eventually cease to will at all. The ascetic may even resort to the extremes of self-mortification in order to eradicate the craving which he abhors as the source of his own existence. At last, if death comes, it is welcome and accepted as a longed-for deliverance.

The insight of the saint eschews expression in ordinary language "[f]or the concept is unfruitful for the real inner nature of virtue, just as it is for art" (WWR I, 368). The compassion of the saint does not find adequate expression in words, but in the actions that constitute the course of a person's life. It is in this context that Schopenhauer likens compassion to "practical mysticism": "[I]t is something our faculty of reason can give no direct account of" (BM, 166) and which "ultimately springs from the same knowledge that constitutes the essence of all mysticism proper" (BM, 212).

Schopenhauer's doctrine of the denial of the will must ultimately culminate in a negation. The ascetic saint enters a state of will-lessness in which he is divorced from, and no longer cognizant of, the things of this world. With the complete surrendering of the will, the phenomena are likewise abolished. Thus, when Schopenhauer's teaching reaches its apex, it can address only "what is denied or given up; but what is gained in place of this, what is laid hold of, it is forced . . . to describe as nothing" (WWR II, 612). Philosophy must terminate at the point where "cognition" is no longer bridled by the forms of knowledge; "it is precisely here," where the philosopher can proceed only negatively, "that the mystic proceeds positively" (WWR I, 612).

In the widest sense, Schopenhauer writes, *mysticism* denotes "every guidance to the immediate awareness of that which is not reached either by perception or conception, or generally by any knowledge" (WWR II, 611). Whereas the philosopher bases his epistemology on a consideration of the objective phenomena available to all, the mystic begins with "his inner, positive, individual experience, in which he finds himself as the eternal and only being" (WWR I, 611). Moreover, the philosopher can demonstrate his conclusions through argument and force of reason; the mystic can only insist that we accept his conclusions at his word.

In an essay from *Parerga and Paralipomena*, "On Philosophy and Its Method," Schopenhauer attempts to distinguish philosophy from *mystical "illuminism"* in greater detail. Thus, while the proper scope of philosophy is directed outward from the subject to the objective order, "*illuminism* asserts itself as its antithesis. Directed essentially *inwards*, illuminism has as its organon inner illumination, intellectual intuition, higher consciousness, immediately knowing reason, divine consciousness, unification, and the like, and disparages rationalism as the 'light of nature'" (PP II, 9).

If illuminism is based in religion, it becomes mysticism; and the fundamental defect of illuminism lies in the fact that this type of knowledge, *in principle*, cannot be communicated. Since philosophy should be communicable knowledge, it must be rationalism. Notwithstanding this admonition, Schopenhauer warns that at the end of his philosophy he has acknowledged the realm of illuminism, but has refused to position himself on such ground.

> Nevertheless, a concealed illuminism may often enough underlie rationalism; and to such an illuminism the philosopher then looks as to a hidden compass, whereas he admittedly steers his course only by the stars, that is, in accordance with external objects which clearly lie before him and which alone he takes into account. This is admissible because

> he does not undertake to communicate incommunicable knowledge, but his communications remain purely objective and rational.
>
> (PP II, 10–11)

To conclude this section, there are four separate strains of mysticism in Schopenhauer's thought: the logical-linguistic mysticism of the philosopher; the aesthetic contemplation of the genius; the nirvanic will-lessness of the saint; and the higher consciousness of the illuminist. But there is also a larger, more sweeping, division of mysticism in Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation*: a type of immanent mysticism, rooted in intuitive perception and seeking to fathom the "kernel of the world"; and another, beginning with supersensuous capacities or intellectual intuitions attempting to directly access "the Absolute." Schopenhauer cannot be certain that the extraordinary insight of the illuminist is in error and thus concedes that the philosopher may look to illuminism as an inner compass. But since the illuminists' extrasensorial foundation is quite beyond the proper scope of philosophy, Schopenhauer has "guarded against setting even one foot thereon" (PP II, 10), and has instead confined himself to an immanent world view. In this connection Schopenhauer writes:

> I try everywhere *to go to the very root of things* . . . This happens by virtue of a natural disposition that makes it well nigh impossible for me to rest content with any general and abstract knowledge that is stillfore indefinite, with mere concepts, not to mention words. On the contrary, I am urged forward until I have plainly before me the ultimate basis of all concepts and propositions which is at all times intuitive.
>
> (PP I, 131)

But as Schopenhauer approaches the world's core – the will as thing-in-itself – he also approximates a point where meaningful discourse fades and consciousness begins to wane. Eventually, even the subject–object dichotomy of all forms of phenomena entirely ceases. The path of immanence, too, (open to the philosopher, genius, and saint) must ultimately culminate in the silence of the mystic.

Coarsely, albeit accurately phrased: Schopenhauer will drill as deeply as he can into the world as given (beginning with intuitive perception and going to the ultimate ground of things, even if such grounds eschew the rigid confines of reason and language), but he will not accept, without reservation, just anything that falls from the heavens ("the so-called supersensuous, the absolute, the good Lord, and whatever else there is said to be") (PP I, 185). Schopenhauer's treatment of mysticism appears inconsistent only to the extent that these two *directions* of mystical insight are conflated.

6. Asceticism

As discussed in the previous section, Schopenhauer believes that the basis of morality is the recognition that all phenomena are manifestations of a single thing-in-itself. Once the veil of illusion is lifted to the extent that one no longer makes the egoistical distinction between himself and the person of others, it ineluctably follows that he regards the endless suffering of all sentient creatures as his own. Upon attaining this state of virtue, a man can no longer stand isolated from the world and turn a dispas-

sionate eye toward the sorrow of others, for he recognizes that he is one with every other being.

Penetrating the principle of sufficient reason, however, is not without its balm, for knowledge of the inner nature of the thing-in-itself ultimately "becomes the *quieter* of all and every willing" (WWR I, 379). The calamities of this world are deprived of their sting to the extent that we can effect a thorough renunciation of the representational world. Asceticism, therefore, involves not only a reprieve, but possibly a final escape from the execrable machinations of the will. One who can turn the will upon itself may eventually achieve a state of nirvanic will-lessness. In such an event, the will turns away from life, and begins to shudder at the pleasures in which it recognizes the affirmation of life. Extending one's wretched phenomenal existence no longer appears as an end to be desired, but as a tragedy to be avoided. Ultimately, "[m]an attains to the state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true composure, and complete willlessness" (WWR I, 379). Indeed, the holy ascetic may even resort to the extremes of fasting, self-castigation, and self-torture so that by constant privation and suffering, he can strangle the will which he abhors as the source of his own existence.

> Finally, if death comes, which breaks up the phenomenon of this will, the essence of such will having long expired through free denial of itself except for the feeble residue which appears as the vitality of this body, then it is most welcome, and is most cheerfully accepted as a longed-for deliverance. It is not merely the phenomenon, as in the case of others, that comes to an end with death, but the inner being itself that is abolished; this had a feeble existence merely in the phenomenon. This slender thread is now severed; for him who ends thus, the world has at the same time ended.
>
> (WWR I, 382)

All of this defies ready comprehension. How could the individual – who is but a phenomenal objectification of the will – destroy not only the self, but the noumenon in the same transaction? If there is only *one* will, just what does the saint destroy through ascetic mortification?

This situation is rendered even more complicated by Schopenhauer's discussion of the Platonic Ideas. In pertinent part, Schopenhauer instructs that the will objectifies itself just as completely in one specific individual as it would in the entire species of which that particular is a representative. The multiplication in space and time of numerous particulars has no meaning with respect to the noumenon, but only in regard to the phenomena. "Therefore it could be asserted that if, *per impossible*, a single being, even the most insignificant, were truly annihilated, the whole world would inevitably be destroyed with it" (WWR I, 128–29).

This tangle of themes initially appears intractable. Numerous commentators (Hamlyn 1980, 149–155; Copleston 1947, 49; Gardiner 1963, 295–97; and Atwell 1995, 159–60) have grappled, unhappily, with this dilemma. Yet a simple solution to the quandary can be quickly found once one recognizes the heavy influence of Eastern thought upon Schopenhauer's philosophy.

The Eastern religions teach that the phenomenal world of ordinary experience is one of illusion. The individual is connected to the phenomenal world solely by willing; by his egoistic attachment to the illusory phenomena of empirical reality. But the enlightened one who has freed himself from all desire escapes into the *nothingness* of

Nirvana. But what remains for the conscious ego if all sentiency and knowledge have been obliterated? What is left for a subject bereft of all objects? In short, nothing is left; everything has vanished. It is clear, however, that this "everything" is everything cognizable. There has been no true ontological alteration in the number of existents. But if we allow that there can be no object without subject, nor subject without object, when the holy ascetic has so shattered the bonds of illusion that held even his own phenomenal existence intact, the world, too, is seemingly abolished. "No will: no representation, no world" (PP II, 10).

The solution to Schopenhauer's "mysterious" passage can be explained in one swift blow: the discussion of the will's self-negation through ascetic mortification occurs at the level of metaphor. The ascetic saint who has so thoroughly purged desire as to facilitate his own phenomenal demise has affected a state of all-encompassing willlessness. Schopenhauer thus rightly contends that a will that does not will is no will at all! Schopenhauer's teaching of the Platonic Ideas along with the allied conviction that not even the most insignificant particle could ever truly be destroyed are metaphysical doctrines. Schopenhauer appears inconsistent only to the extent that these two distinct levels of analysis are conflated.

See also 1 Schopenhauer on Scientific Knowledge; 2 Perception and Understanding: Schopenhauer, Reid and Kant; 5 Schopenhauer and Transcendental Idealism; 16 Schopenhauer on the Metaphysics of Art and Morality; 25 Schopenhauer's Fairy Tale about Fichte: The Origin of *The World as Will and Representation* in German Idealism.

Note

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8

Schopenhauer on Sex, Love and Emotions

GUDRUN VON TEVENAR

1

Given that Schopenhauer postulated one reality – the will – behind all representations, and given, further, that this reality manifests itself completely in each and every one of these representations, so that their phenomenal differences, of whatever kind, can be accounted for solely as differences in the degree of the will's objectification in them, then it can come as no surprise that Schopenhauer makes a similar claim regarding the operational mechanism by which the will expresses itself in these manifestations. And this is the mechanism of will as blindly striving will to life. Consequently, both the inorganic and organic world exhibit a structure perceived as the structure of an underlying unified whole, the will, which proceeds progressively from mere force in inorganic nature, such as gravity, through the reactions of plants and into the expressions of willed actions in humans. This structural unity and continuity is particularly evident in the animal and human sphere in what Schopenhauer variously names as instincts, emotions, passions, affects and so on, which, so he claims, animate and drive animals and humans alike. Today, of course, it is quite commonplace to describe ourselves both in scientific and everyday discourse as human animals and to stress the somatic and psychological parallels between us and non-human animals. While Schopenhauer's central role in the development of this line of thought is appreciated by scholars, the metaphysical theory supporting these claims, which Schopenhauer considered fundamental and inseparable from it, has failed to find widespread acceptance.

2

The various manifestations of will in the organic world fall into kinds or species (*Gattung*). It is these which carry the unchanging imprint of will on that particular aspect of its objectification. Particular instantiations of any species, such as a particular oak tree, dog or human, are temporary and dispensable, destined to die, while the

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species itself is permanent and persists throughout. Schopenhauer emphasizes that it is solely the life of the species that nature, or will, pursues, with individuals merely functioning as vehicles for the preservation of the species through procreation. To ensure both the preservation and identity of the species as well as the survival of its individuals, all members of the species share hereditary endowments of certain fixed, unchangeable characteristics: reactions to specific stimuli of light, warmth, touch, for example, in some plants; teeth and aggressiveness in beasts of prey; timidity and swiftness in animals of flight, and so on. Organic life is thus determined both in its physical and mental features (where applicable) by the requirements of the species. This follows directly from Schopenhauer's theory that our bodies are direct manifestations of will. Hence all our states of willing are but states of the body as will:

> Everybody on observation of their own self-consciousness will soon become aware that its object is at all times one's own will . . . all craving, striving, desiring, wanting, longing, hoping, loving, rejoicing, celebrating, and so on, as well as not-willing or resisting, and all disgust, flight, fear, anger, hate, grief, suffering of pain, in short, all affects and passions, are to be counted as expressions of will. These affects and passions are but more or less strong or weak, sometimes violent and stormy, sometimes light movements of a frustrated or encouraged, satisfied or unsatisfied, will.
>
> (FW I, § 2)

While, as we will see below, intellect in its connection with motives does have a role in modifying and differentiating the behavior of humans and some non-human animals, this role is strictly limited and thus barely qualifies Schopenhauer's claim that both our instinctual and emotional life are will and thus in some fundamental way the life of the species within us – driving, willing, guiding, ruling us, generally without us being consciously aware of it. One could say, therefore, that the whole wonderfully varied and immensely intricate fabric of our physical, psychological, and intellectual life is, in a deep and mysterious way, lived at the bidding of the will. Schopenhauer supports his theory that bodies and their various states of willing are one and the same thing, namely will, by pointing to what he claims would otherwise be an inexplicable fact: whatever afflicts the body has a concurrent affective state, and, conversely, whatever elicits an emotion gives rise to instantaneous bodily change. "The identity of the body and the will further shows itself, among other things, in the fact that every vehement and excessive movement of the will, in other words, every emotion, agitates the body and its inner workings directly and immediately, and disturbs the course of its vital functions" (WWR I, 101). Schopenhauer pursues this topic in more detail in *The Will in Nature,* linking our emotions and feelings of pleasure, pain, fear, anger, and so on, to their specific bodily expressions, such as smiling, weeping, trembling, etc. Schopenhauer insists that acts of will and acts of the body do not stand in a causal relation, though language may mislead us. Thus it is not the case that we, say, perceive something fearful which then causes the various bodily agitations: they are one and the same thing, we just register them differently. As noted above, Schopenhauer makes little distinction between human and non-human animals regarding their most basic instincts and drives, such as survival, mating and care for their young. In an eloquent passage in *On the Basis of Morality,* he explains:

> One must be really quite blind . . . not to recognise that the essential and principal thing in animal and man is the same, and that what distinguishes the one from the other is not to be found in the primary and original principle, in the archaeus, in their inner nature . . . which is in both alike the *will* of the individual, but only in the secondary, in the intellect, in the degree of the cognitive faculty. In man this degree is incomparably higher through the addition of the faculty of *abstract* knowledge, called *reason*. Yet this superiority is traceable only to a greater cerebral development, hence to the somatic difference of a single part, the brain, and in particular, its quantity. On the other hand, the similarity between animal and man is incomparably greater, both psychically and somatically. And so we must remind the Western, Judaized despiser of animals and idolater of the faculty of reason that, just as he was suckled by *his* mother, so too was the dog by *his*.
>
> (BM, 177–78)

This explanation is on par with Schopenhauer's theory of one will in all phenomena. So perhaps it is his well-known love of animals which has tempted Schopenhauer to go even further and ascribe to animals also emotions such as joy, grief, hate, envy, love, longing and so on (WWR II, 204). Yet one could argue that some of these emotions, envy and longing, for instance, depend on concepts so as to compare a present with a non-present state of affairs the animal longs for or is envious of. Although Schopenhauer claims that animals share with humans understanding (*Verstand*), and thus are able to make causal connections which can become motives for actions, animals do not have reason (*Vernunft*). But only with reason can concepts be formed, and only concepts, in turn, liberate us from dependency on the here and now to which animals are bound. In section 19 of *On the Basis of Morality* Schopenhauer referred to science when claiming that animals undergo the same or relevantly similar somatic changes as do humans when physically aroused through, say, the presence of a potential mate, or when undergoing emotional stress such as separation from their young. However, in animals this arousal or distress can only occur in the here and now of the present or through direct perceptual associations and not, as would be the case with humans and their concepts, also in memory or projected into the future.

The other distinction between human and non-human animals is character. In addition to our basic character which is mainly constituted by our species-specific instincts and drives, there is also, according to Schopenhauer, an individual character which gives human individuals distinctively individual characteristics. Without going into the philosophical difficulties of this theory, the fact of individual human character explains, firstly, the very obvious fact that humans – though behaving in many instances uniformly and predictably – in many other instances do not do so but display individual and varied responses in shared circumstances. Secondly, individual character also explains why some individuals can step outside the limitations of species-given behavior while others are utterly unable to do so. Both points will be discussed again below.

3

We have noted that our instincts, drives, emotions, passions and so on, all arise through will; that our intellect both in its faculty of understanding and reason is (mostly) subservient to the will's demands; and that our intelligible character, chosen by an act of

transcendental freedom, is again nothing but will since will is indeed all there is. Without doubt, there is something very satisfying in monolithic systems of this kind as everything is neatly explained and well accommodated within one single all-embracing entity. However, what makes Schopenhauer's system somewhat alarming is the quality of his single entity – the will. The will is a blind, restless striving without purpose or end; it is of unspeakable horror as perpetually in conflict with itself: self-destroying, self-devouring and ceaselessly self-regenerating in order to further self-destroy and so on, endlessly. Such is the will's self-inflicted and inescapable pain that, as Schopenhauer claims, it would be better if the world did not exist and we had not been born. Given that an entity of this quality underlies all our physical, psychological, and intellectual lives, it is obvious that whatever is experienced in these lives, and whatever feelings and affects are expressed in response thereto, must unavoidably bear the imprint of the will's quality.[1] The will's most fundamental characteristic of will to life is interpreted by Schopenhauer as a boundless egoism in every living thing:

> everyone wants everything for himself, wants to possess, or at least control, everything, and would like to destroy whatever opposes him. . . . This disposition is *egoism*, which is essential to everything in nature. But it is precisely through egoism that the will's inner conflict with itself attains to such fearful revelation. . . . In the consciousness that has reached the highest degree, that is, human consciousness, egoism, like knowledge, pain, and pleasure, must also have reached the highest degree, and the conflict of individuals conditioned by it must appear here in the most terrible form.
>
> (WWR I, 332–33)

So egoism is total affirmation of will as one's own self with its main feature a ruthless will to life to the exclusion of all else. According to Schopenhauer, our egoism is "colossal" (see BM, § 14). It makes us blind to the needs of others, ravenous with greed, and utterly restless in pursuit of an endless procession of desires. A further deeply negative quality of will is found in what Schopenhauer considers an evident fact, namely that feelings of happiness and pleasure are not something we can actually positively experience – they are simply the absence of pain and want. Indeed, with only pain and want truly impinging on our consciousness, happiness must then be just a kind of non-event, a momentary pause in a seemingly endless state of pain or stress, and so not anything positive in its own right. Moreover, because the essence of will is a blind striving without purpose or goal, all the will's manifestations are necessarily subject to that selfsame striving too. Naturally, we might be tempted to declare that our own personal striving is not blind but purposeful, since we can name specific goals or aspirations as its content. But, alas, this is just an illusion. It is striving as such, striving for striving's sake, which drives the will and hence also us. This is supported, according to Schopenhauer, by the fact that we succumb, inevitably and invariably, to satiety and paralyzing, painful, boredom as soon as the objects of our striving are achieved. As this boredom will only cease when we are once again driven by striving and desiring, there is therefore no respite from suffering for us in this life.

Admittedly, once will is accepted as sole reality, it is unavoidable that everything deriving from and explained by it should bear the imprint of its horror and pain. Hence Schopenhauer, again unavoidably, focuses almost exclusively on feelings and emotions of a decidedly wretched and depressing kind.[2] Or, where this is not wholly possible as

in, say, friendship or love, he will describe it in such a way as leading eventually to an unsatisfactory outcome all the same, as will be discussed below. Numerous objections have been voiced against Schopenhauer's pessimistic interpretation of our life.[3] While admitting that suffering is pervasive in animal and human life, as everyone can indeed see, objectors can nonetheless argue that that same life usually also has its positively experienced moments of joy and reward, also for everyone to see. And while striving and desiring can indeed induce painful tension, one can argue that this in itself does not exclude hope and happy anticipation. Even the happiness of goals achieved can be revisited through memory, and so on. It is simply a question of balance. Take egoism: it is an empirical fact that egoism is a basic disposition of all humans and it may well be necessary for our very existence. And yes, there are individuals whose egoism is so overwhelming as to be destructive of other concerns and values. Yet in most cases egoism is in balance with these other concerns and values. Consider here Hume's mild comments on selfishness when he states that selfishness has 'been carried much too far' in philosophy. Hume argues: "tho it be rare to meet with one, who loves any single person better than himself; yet 'tis as rare to meet with one, in whom all the kind affections, taken together do not over-balance the selfish" (Hume 1992, 486–7).

4

Leaving romantic and sexual love for the next section, let us investigate now Schopenhauer's account of other kinds of love and distinguish here: ordinary love, parental love, and love for humankind (*Menschenliebe*). Under ordinary love I understand those cases of attachment, devotion, care, approval and respect, we have for such varied objects as friends, one's dog, religion, art, one's country, one's garden, food, etc. What is distinctive about this love is the combination of affection and some sort of approval, esteem, respect, even veneration. Unlike sexual and parental love which are very much under the will's command, in the scheme of species-specific things nothing much depends on our ordinary loves. They are thus somehow supererogatory and (almost) outside the will's direct rule and so, perhaps, leave us with a limited choice in the matter. On the combination of love and respect Schopenhauer comments:

> It is good fortune to receive love and respect. Generally one ought, in order to maintain respect, not be loved too much. . . . Affection and veneration do not easily combine. Though one should not be feared too much one should also not be loved too much. Love introduces familiarity and with every step forward here, respect retreats a step. Hence one rather receives a venerating and respectful love than a devoted one.[4]

This has striking similarity with Kant's comments on friendship in *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Friendship, Kant says there, is "the most intimate union of love with respect" and is "readily seen" as "unattainable in practice" (Kant 1996, 215–17). The reason for this is that love and respect are somehow incompatible and hence in conflict, so that when love grows stronger respect simultaneously grows weaker. Kant explains: "For love can be regarded as attraction and respect as repulsion, and if the principle of love bids friends to draw closer, the principle of respect requires them to stay at a proper

distance from each other" (ibid.). Kant further states that "once respect is violated, its presence within is irretrievably lost." One can lose respect by accepting help or kindness from the other: "But if one of them accepts a favour from the other, then he may well be able to count on equality in love, but not in respect; for he sees himself obviously a step lower" (ibid.). Though Kant's account is perhaps more radical than Schopenhauer's, both share the conviction that love and respect, or affection and esteem, do not readily combine and their delicate balance needs much protection and the most careful management. But this is very puzzling if not indeed disturbing, for it implies, at its most generous, that either love or respect, or both, are in the nature of things rather weak. But it could also imply that there is nothing particularly worthy of respect in any of us, so that respect inevitably crumbles if one is seen close to. It might further imply that love is so feeble and vulnerable that it can only be kept going by a carefully maintained distance which one might as well call polite pretence. Yet, it is an empirical fact that one can at times experience deep love together with great respect, or affection with esteem. Is it possible that Kant and Schopenhauer were unaware of this?

Turning now to parental love: we can agree that parental love is part of the instinctual endowment of all human and non-human animals because necessary for the survival of the species. This is supported by the distress and abhorrence caused in the exceptional cases where humans or animals reject their young. Schopenhauer gives eloquent descriptions of the devotion animals accord their young often risking their own lives for their safety. But he is not equally forthcoming in praise of maternal love in humans, mainly because he regards women's preoccupation with childcare as a sign of their inferiority. Since parental love is necessary for the survival of the species, it is, so to speak, hard-wired into us and so does not enjoy that very minimal element of choice we have noted in the case of ordinary love. Thus, while parental love requires maximum devotion, affection and care for the young, it does not equally require respect, approval or esteem for them. Of course, these feelings are highly desirable, but they are not necessary. There are numerous cases of parents loving unworthy offspring with great devotion when they would not accord them any respect or approval if they could only reach the kind of distance required for neutral appraisal and judgment. Schopenhauer claims that:

> Through its source a mother's love is purely instinctive in animals as also in humans, but it stops with the physical helplessness of the children. It should be succeeded by love based on custom and reason, which often is amiss, particularly when the mother did not love the father. A father's love for his children is of a different kind and more valid: it rests on the recognition in them of his own inner self, it is therefore of metaphysical origin.
>
> (PP II, 625)

So a purely instinctive, that is, according to Schopenhauer, a mother's love will stop with the "trigger" – the neediness and helplessness of the child. But a father's love is different and more valid because of its metaphysical source. I am not certain what Schopenhauer wants to say here, but assume it has to do with his account of the different hereditary legacies of father and mother. Apparently, we inherit our character, that is, our emotional and mental dispositions, from the father, and as these are *directly* based on will they could be said to be of metaphysical origin. From the mother we

inherit our intellectual powers (WWR II, 522). Now this might look like a rare exception to Schopenhauer's well-known misogyny, but no! The intellect, remember, is secondary and subservient to the will.

We now come to Schopenhauer's account of love of humankind (*Menschenliebe*).[5] *Menschenliebe* is one of two forms of the emotion of compassion (*Mitleid*),[6] which, according to Schopenhauer, is the source of all virtues and the only truly pure love. As sympathy and compassion are discussed elsewhere in this volume, I will here just use compassion as an example of how a basic emotion, i.e., a direct impulse of will common to all of us, can interact with intellect and character and thus be given individual expression.

According to Schopenhauer, we all share three basic incentives. These are egoism – the incentive to act for our own weal; compassion – for the weal of others; malice – for the woe of others (BM, § 14–16). Weal and woe (or pleasure and pain) are ingredients of all incentives because direct expressions of agreement or disagreement with will (BM, § 16). That is also why all three incentives are dispositions present in everyone's character (though in varying degree), which in turn explains how compassion is possible at all given Schopenhauer's verdict that our egoism is colossal. Only when we act purely on the incentive of compassion, i.e., purely for the well-being of others, do our actions have moral worth. Most of the time, however, we act on a mixture of incentives. Which part of the mixture is taken up at any one time depends on motives interacting with context, character, and knowledge. As an example, consider a drunk lying in the gutter exposed to injury and abuse. According to Schopenhauer, the representation of this, together with relevant beliefs, is the motive, and any resulting action reflects the co-operation of motive with different incentives. Now imagine three agents. Agent E, acting on the sole or dominant incentive of egoism, leaves the site immediately; she does not want to get involved. Agent C, acting on the sole or dominant incentive of compassion, gives first aid and calls the ambulance. Agent M, acting on the sole or dominant incentive of malice, takes the opportunity to abuse the drunk and inflict further injury. It is the agent's character which determines which incentive is dominant. All things being equal, i.e., no other facts intervening, a malicious character has such a weak incentive to act for the well-being of others that she rarely if ever acts that way.

Our intellect adds to actions through knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) which might here also be translated as insight. Insight into the real nature of the world, which is, according to Schopenhauer, the basic oneness of all there is, enables us to modify the way our basic incentives interact with motives. Thus the insight that there is really no essential difference between myself and others, since others, in Schopenhauer's famous words, are just "I once more," can strengthen the emotional and intellectual base of compassion and so contribute substantially to agents' dispositions to help. Yet to be able to understand an insight of this kind depends again on character. The selfish person by her very character cannot assimilate such an insight since there is always a barrier between herself and others that inclines her towards a mainly hostile attitude to the world. So for the selfish person the world is, Schopenhauer claims, essentially "not-I." Obviously, such an agent will not have the same altruistic dispositions as a compassionate one, who in her very character and thus in her whole being demonstrates the truth of the insight of the basic oneness of all there is, though she might not grasp it intellectually (BM, § 22).

Schopenhauer states that our character, including the intelligible part, is unalterable. Character is fixed in our being and our actions are just expressions of our being. In other words, we cannot change what we basically are. It might be argued that we can change the way we act, but, given Schopenhauer's theory of motive formation, this is not possible either. What we can do though, according to Schopenhauer, is to get to know what we truly are and "be" what we are. This sounds very much like a forerunner to Nietzsche's prescription "to become what you are."[7]

We cannot end this account of love without mentioning Schopenhauer's deep love for animals. Schopenhauer takes contemporary and particularly Kantian ethics to task for their scant regard for the well-being of animals, and he greatly praises the English nation for their love and protection of them.[8] According to Schopenhauer, love for animals is no mere sentimentality. It too is founded on the insight of the basic oneness of all there is and is thus an expression of our deep awareness of kinship with them.

5

Schopenhauer claims to be the first philosopher to offer a "Metaphysics of Sexual Love."[9] Whatever the credentials of this claim,[10] it must be acknowledged that his account is fascinating, very coherent and seamlessly fits his metaphysics of will:

> Indeed, it may be said that man is concrete sexual impulse, for he comes into being through an act of copulation and the desire of his desires is an act of copulation, and this impulse alone perpetuates and holds together his phenomenal appearance. The will to life seems to express itself primarily as a drive to maintain the individual; yet this is only a stage towards the drive to maintain the species. This latter drive must be more intense to the degree that the life of the species surpasses that of the individual in duration, extension, and value. The sexual impulse is therefore the most complete expression of the will to life, its most distinctly articulated type. Its being the origin of the individual, as well as its dominance over all other desires of natural humans, are in perfect agreement with this.
>
> (WWR II, 514)

Schopenhauer's statement that man is "concrete sexual impulse" is to be taken literally: first, because genitalia are the very symbol of the will to life, and second, the pursuit of this impulse is forever on man's mind, creeping into and disrupting all other occupations including affairs of state. Thoughts of sex are all pervasive such that every masked remark, every slightly naughty joke, every insinuation, every double meaning, is instantly understood and reacted to. Schopenhauer states that although sex is the most powerful drive of our whole being, we tend to cover it with a polite "fig leaf" and are secretive if not indeed furtive about it. The most widely used "fig leaf" to cover sex and copulation is the romantic vocabulary of love:

> As a rule, this [sexual love] is the principal theme of all dramatic works, tragedies as well as comedies, romantic as well as classical, Indian as well as European. . . . the most successful descriptive accounts of this passion, such, for example, as *Romeo and Juliet, La Nouvelle Heloise,* and *Werther,* have gained immortal fame.
>
> (WWR II, 531)

Romantic passion is glorified in many cultures and, as the above examples from literature show, our pre-occupation with and desire for sex in the guise of romantic love can assume such proportions that we willingly lose our possessions, our honor and even our life in its pursuit. Yet in all this, Schopenhauer claims, we are in a sense duped by will. For will, as he never tires to point out, is interested in the individual only to the extent that it furthers the maintenance and continuance of the species. So, what really happens in sex is not the gratification of our desire but the fulfillment of requirements of the species. The passion, the desire, the lust, the ecstasy are not anything in their own right, they are simply instrumental; they are there, to put it bluntly, to make us do the will's bidding. But, one might say, this is nothing new: we all know that, basically, the purpose of sexual intercourse is the procreation of children. Yet Schopenhauer goes further than that. He claims that the will's demand shows itself most decisively not in the sexual act itself, i.e., not just in the plain purpose of having children, but in the selection of the mate, that is, in the type of children to be born. Hence, what is really important is not that we have sex but with whom. Again, one might say, that is obvious. For, naturally, most of us want to have sex with those we fancy, with those we are attracted to, and especially, using a word Schopenhauer would like us to use with caution in this context, with those we love. But precisely here, Schopenhauer insists, are we most in the will's thrall.

Schopenhauer goes to great length to debunk any illusion that when we fall in love we are making a positive choice, however mysteriously arrived at, based on qualities of the beloved person: beauty, charm, kindness, intelligence, strength, or whatever. Schopenhauer admits that we *do select* for the qualities just listed, but he insists we are in error if we believe we select them because we value them in the beloved and think they will increase our appreciation and happiness of him or her. Unconsciously, our selection aims solely to secure these qualities for the next generation. Individual attractions, therefore, are strictly attractions of a sexual mate in the narrow sense and are linked to his or her fittingness to produce good offspring.

> That this particular child will be begotten is the true aim of the whole love-story, even though the parties concerned are unaware of it; the method and manner by which this end is attained is of secondary importance. However loudly those persons of a lofty and sentimental soul, especially those in love, may raise an outcry over the rough realism of my view, they are nevertheless mistaken.
>
> (WWR II, 535)

So, species requirements determine selection and choice: this is *the* way to ensure that physical deficiencies of individuals do not get perpetuated within the species and the true and perfect type is maintained or re-established.

> Thus through a thousand physical accidents and moral misfortunes there arises a very great variety of deteriorations of the human form; yet its true type in all its parts is always re-established. This takes place under the guidance of that sense of beauty which generally directs the sexual impulse, and without which this impulse sinks to the level of a disgusting need. Accordingly, in the first place, everyone will decidedly prefer and ardently desire the most beautiful individuals; . . . in the second place he will specially desire in the other individual *those* perfections that he himself lacks; in fact, he will even find beautiful those

> imperfections that are the opposite of his own. Hence, for example, short men look for tall women, persons with fair hair like those with dark, and so on.
>
> (WWR II, 539)

So we are kidding ourselves when we believe *we make love* simply for the joy of uniting with our chosen beloved. What really happens is that we *mate* according to the will's specifications and thus obey our unconscious aim to attach ourselves to sexual partners who will improve on us or cancel any deficiencies for the sake of the next generation. But why are we so compliant? Because we are deluded by "love":

> nature can attain her end only by implanting in the individual a certain *delusion*, and by virtue of this, that which in truth is merely a good thing for the species seems to him to be a good thing for himself, so that he serves the species, whereas he is under the delusion that he is serving himself.
>
> (WWR II, 538)

It follows that the importance we attach to our loves, the serious and ardent passion with which we pursue conquest and possession of the beloved, can be accounted for solely by the importance attached to our mating in the interests of the species. Having solely the next generation in mind, and disregarding or channeling any preferences participants themselves might have, is of course precisely what happens in animal husbandry. Breeders are very particular when deciding who to mate to whom. They carefully consider type, conformation and the presence or absence of the kind of qualities they want to promote in that breed. In no way would they leave something as important as the next generation to mere chance or caprice – hence breeders operate along the selfsame principles as the will within us!

6

There is a price to be paid for this manipulation of individuals. As we have seen, individuals are deluded by will into believing that the qualities loved and desired in their beloved will contribute most to their future happiness, when in fact they contribute most to the species. When these ends conflict, and Schopenhauer thinks they mostly do, the price to be paid is usually the individual's happiness. This becomes apparent soon after fulfillment of one's desire. Schopenhauer claims that every lover will soon experience an "extraordinary disillusionment" and will note with astonishment that what was desired with such singular passion "achieves nothing more than any other sexual satisfaction."

> In fact, love is often in contradiction not only with external circumstances, but even with the lover's own individuality . . . But the will of the species is so much more powerful than that of the individual, that the lover shuts his eyes to all the qualities repugnant to him, overlooks everything, misjudges everything, and binds himself for ever to the object of his passion. He is so completely infatuated by that delusion, which vanishes as soon as the will of the species is satisfied, and leaves behind a detested partner for life.
>
> (WWR II, 555)

Schopenhauer has nothing positive to say about marriage: it is strife, conflict and constraint. The man lusts after another woman as soon as he has achieved possession of this one, while the woman cleaves to the man for the sake of her children. But her beauty, which made her so desirable in the first place, soon vanishes with the bearing of children. This is one reason why, according to Schopenhauer, we have the institution of marriage with its prohibition of premarital sex. Virtue, he claims, has nothing to do with sexuality. Women's so-called "honor" is but an exchange of their virginity for lifelong maintenance; it is just a conspiracy amongst females to secure their future and those of their children. Anyone who gives herself to a man without exacting the price of marriage is a "fallen woman" who has offended against this code of honor and will therefore be shunned and shamed by society as a whole.

Other than acknowledging that sex is necessary for the continuation of the species and that through will-induced desire we eagerly comply, Schopenhauer finds not much to recommend in sex. And he insinuates that we somehow know this: while plants exhibit their sexual organs openly and animals mate quite casually, humans hide their sexual organs and nothing is as embarrassing or shameful, especially for the female, as being caught during copulation – yet the resulting pregnancy is usually proudly displayed (PP II, 317). Sex, because of marriage, is a lifelong burden for the man and too much passion is akin to torture or madness. Hung between the urgency of desire and its inevitable disappointment, sex promises much and holds "pathetically little." We can only regain the peace, innocence and gaiety enjoyed in childhood, if we deny the demands of sexual instinct. Naturally this is the same as denying the will to life itself; a possibility only for those few able through character and intellect to see through the delusions of romantic love and to progress along the extraordinarily difficult ascetic path where complete chastity is the compulsory first step.

Because sex is instinct towards the procreation of children, Schopenhauer abhors homosexuality and notes with approval that it is a sin according to Christian Law. The same goes for any other sexual practice which aims to prevent conception.

7

It is best to separate two issues regarding Schopenhauer's theory of sexual love. Firstly, his theory has the great merit of providing a philosophically sound account of the dominant position of sexuality in human life. It also breaks new ground (new for Schopenhauer's contemporaries) by exposing the driving role of the unconscious and the entirely subservient role of intellect. Schopenhauer thus gives further substance and sound underpinning to Hume's famous statement that "reason is the slave of the passions." Schopenhauer's theory of sexuality also left an influential legacy in psychology and psychoanalysis.

The second issue concerns Schopenhauer's evaluation of sex. It has been claimed that his well-known and virulent misogyny contributed much to his low assessment of sex, or that the fairly obvious feelings of bitterness and resentment running through his account can be explained by reference to his personality. But these are poor explanations even if they hold. Schopenhauer's theory of sexuality fits neatly and without break or contradiction into his metaphysics, and it is from his metaphysics that the low

evaluation of life and sexual love and pleasure arises. As we have seen, all desiring and striving is experienced as want or lack and thus as inherently painful. Pleasure and happiness are nothing positive and any fulfilled desire soon gives rise to new striving and thus to new dissatisfaction and pain. The many possible objections to Schopenhauer's theory of pleasure and pain thus also apply to his theory of sexuality. Yet, if Schopenhauer's philosophy is to remain consistent, then no exceptions to his pessimism can be allowed, even though many people can testify that sexual love is a positive and rewarding experience in their lives. Perhaps they are just deluded?[11]

See also 17 Schopenhauer on the Value of Compassion; 19 Life-Denial versus Life-Affirmation: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Pessimism and Asceticism; 20 Schopenhauer on the Inevitability of Unhappiness; 21 Schopenhauer and Freud.

Notes

1 See Atwell (1990) for a very good account of human character in Schopenhauer.
2 One could regard compassion in BM as an exception, but compassion is a response to suffering.
3 Simmel (1986) gives a well-balanced critique of Schopenhauer's pessimism; see also the contributions of Gemes & Janaway and Soll in this volume.
4 Schopenhauer in Deussen (1911, Vol. VI, 357). English translation by the author.
5 This is often translated as "philanthropy" which does not quite capture *Menschenliebe.*
6 The other is justice; see BM, § 17.
7 This is (part of) the subtitle of his *Ecce Homo*.
8 See BM, § 19. Here Schopenhauer also reports the founding of the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."
9 See WWR II, § 44, and throughout his work.
10 See Janaway (1994, 49) for comments on this.
11 I have benefited greatly from Christopher Janaway's detailed commentary and also thank Daniel Came for helpful suggestions.

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9

Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas

FRANK C. WHITE

The principal theme of the third book of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* is that the objects of everyday experience are manifestations of Platonic Ideas, while these are manifestations of the will. The knowledge of everyday objects, in so far as this knowledge is acquired by individuals *qua* individuals, is the servant of the will, since everyday objects are of interest to individuals solely as providing them with motives for action. However, it is possible for individuals to rise above the will and to achieve a disinterested and objective kind of knowledge, thereby becoming pure, willless and time-less subjects of knowing. The object of this disinterested kind of knowledge is the eternal being of the Platonic Ideas manifested in natural species and natural forces, and while these Ideas are apprehended in some measure by everyone, they are apprehended pre-eminently by the artist who then expresses them in "his" works (to follow Schopenhauer's invariable use of the masculine form). The purpose of these works is to communicate the Ideas to others, and their essential beauty is nothing other than their ability to do this. Finally, the contemplation of Ideas, whether in art or in nature, affords a temporary liberation from the thralldom of the will, a temporary relief from its desires.

Many commentators express surprise and puzzlement at finding Platonic Ideas in Schopenhauer's account of reality, and in particular they express doubts concerning the Ideas' precise standing. For this reason it is important to see what characteristics Schopenhauer assigns them, what grounds he has for believing in their existence, and how he conceives of their relation to the objects of everyday experience.[1]

1. The Nature of Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas and Their Relation to Individuals

Schopenhauer states, or otherwise expresses the belief, that an Idea is that which "always is and has no becoming" (WWR I, 167), that which "really is" (WWR I, 167,

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170). It is that which depends on nothing, exists in and by itself, and neither becomes nor passes away, but remains always the same (WWR I, 172). It is outside of time and thus eternal, and it alone possesses actual, non-apparent being (WWR I, 176, 181). Ideas constitute the essential and abiding element in the phenomena of this world (WWR I, 184). Since these descriptions are mainly in Plato's own words, and always referred to with approval, it is clear that Schopenhauer wishes to attribute the same inner nature to the Ideas as Plato himself.

Plato has two principal reasons for believing that there are Ideas, the first being that they provide a solution to the problem of "the one and the many," the problem that later came to be known as the problem of universals. His solution to this problem is not fully stated until the *Republic,* but his concern with it is evident from the time of his early dialogues. In the *Republic* he has Socrates assert that

> in our discussions we distinguish and affirm the existence of many beautiful things, many good things, and so on, and the existence of the beautiful itself, the good itself, and an Idea for each case of the many that we previously posited: that is, having posited the *many* we take there to be *one* Idea in each case, referring to it as that which is.
>
> (*Republic*, 507a–b)[2]

Or again: "We are in the habit of positing *one* Idea wherever there is a *many* to which we give the same name" (596a) (cf. *Republic*, 476a; *Phaedo*, 100b–e; *Symposium*, 211a–b).

Schopenhauer's view is in substance the same, even if expressed in terms derived from Kant. "The Idea," he says, "is the unity that has fallen into plurality by virtue of the temporal and spatial form of our intuitive apprehension" (WWR I, 234). "The original and essential unity of an Idea is dispersed into the plurality of individual things by the sensuously and cerebrally conditioned perception of the knowing individual" (WWR II, 365f.). In other words, wherever there is a unity to be found in a plurality of homogeneous individuals, that unity is an Idea. Schopenhauer adds that an Idea may therefore be described as a unity *ante rem* [prior to reality], by contrast with a concept, which is merely *post rem* [subsequent to reality] (WWR I, 235); Ideas are *universalia ante rem*, having an "objective, real existence," while concepts are *universalia post rem* (WWR II, 366).

The second reason that Plato has for believing in Ideas is that they are needed as objects of knowledge (*Republic*, 475e–480, 527b; cf. *Phaedrus*, 247c–e; cf. *Timaeus*, 27d–29c, 51d–52a). True knowledge, he says, is infallible, by which he means that its objects cannot give rise to error because they are unalterably and absolutely what they are; and these objects he calls Ideas. To illustrate his point, Beauty is unalterably and absolutely what it is, and true judgments concerning it are consequently unalterable. While the existence of Ideas may be thus inferred from the fact that they are needed as objects of knowledge or as unities behind pluralities, they are also "perceptual" (*pace* Foster 1999, 232): that is, they may be *seen* or *grasped*. They are seen and grasped by the gods and other souls in the realm beyond the heavens, and even in this world they are occasionally seen by men, suddenly caught sight of at the end of much toil and effort (*Symposium*, 210e–212a; *Phaedo*, 66d–e, 79d; *Republic*, 476b–c; *Phaedrus*, 247c–e). By comparison with knowledge, belief is not infallible, because the objects of belief

are sensible particulars, and sensible particulars are not fully what they are, lying as they do between being and nothing. They "are and are not" in this sense that, unlike the Ideas, they are constantly changing; and, in addition, for any characteristic that they possess, they possess the opposite of that characteristic: if a body is beautiful, for example, it is also ugly (in some other respect). Sensible particulars are thus mere shadows of reality, and the senses themselves give us no accurate or sure information (*Republic*, 476c–d, 520c–d; *Phaedo*, 65a–b). Indeed the senses are deceptive, and anyone who puts his trust in them, thinking their objects to be real, resembles a dreamer mistaking semblance for reality (*Republic*, 476c–d). Finally, knowledge can only be acquired or possessed by one who is "pure," by which is meant one who is freed from the body as far as this is possible, freed from its desires and fears, pleasures and pains, and freed from its reliance on the senses (*Phaedo*, 66d–67b, 69c–d; *Phaedrus*, 250c).

Schopenhauer's characterization of knowledge, or more properly what he calls "real knowledge (*eigentliche Erkenntniß*)," is exactly the same, notwithstanding the fact that he limits its objects to those of aesthetic awareness. These objects, he says, are the objects of a real knowledge as opposed to the "common" knowledge of sensible objects governed by the principle of sufficient reason (WWR I, 171, 178). Further, these objects are Platonic Ideas, realities that are not subject to change and are known with equal truth for all time (WWR I, 184): they are objects of knowledge precisely in virtue of constituting what always and fully is, what exists in and for itself and is unalterable (WWR I, 171). At the same time, the Ideas are seen or grasped in this sense that they are objects of immediate acquaintance, objects of *intuition* (*Anschauung*) (cf. WWR I, 186, 190, 234, 242), apprehended in pure contemplation (WWR I, 178, 184). The ordinary man does not fix his eye on an object for long but quickly looks for the *concept* under which it is to be brought, whereas the artist, the one who has knowledge, strives to *grasp* the Idea of each thing (WWR I, 187f., 194); moreover, that grasp is sudden (WWR I, 178, 196). The objects of everyday experience are different from the Ideas in that they have no true being, but are constantly becoming and never are (WWR I, 171); consequently they are not objects of real knowledge but of belief, dependent upon the sense. Their reality is no more than apparent, shadowy and dreamlike, and may just as well be referred to as non-being as being. Finally, those who achieve knowledge of Ideas are pure and will-less subjects (cf. WWR I, 171, 178, 181, 209), pure in the sense of being freed from the body's desires and fears, pleasures and pains, and freed as much as possible from reliance on the senses – or so we must assume. Real knowledge

> tears itself free from the will by the subject's ceasing to be individual and being a pure will-less subject, no longer concerned with relations among things in accordance with the principle of sufficient reason, but resting in fixed contemplation of the object presented to it out of its connexion with anything else.
>
> (WWR I, 178)

Schopenhauer must be taken here to mean that contemplation of the object is the means to apprehending the Idea expressed in it, rather as for Plato awareness of objects is the means to attaining recollected or even direct knowledge of Ideas made manifest in them (*Phaedo*, 72e–75b; *Symposium*, 209e–211b).

Plato often speaks of the Ideas in terms suggesting that they are immanent entities, referring to them as present in things, as communing with them, as being possessed by

them, or as being shared out among them (*Phaedo*, 100d–e; *Republic*, 476a; *Sophist*, 247a). But he also speaks of them in terms suggesting that they are *ante rem* or transcendent, describing them as ideals, as models, or as objects of contemplation and recollection, existing in another world while imaged, copied or resembled in this (*Phaedo*, 74a–77a; *Republic*, 500b–e; *Timaeus*, 27d–29a, 39e). This latter talk of copying and resemblance is peculiarly unsatisfactory, as Plato himself was aware (*Parmenides*, 132c–133a), and it will be considered more closely later on, when the intelligibility of Schopenhauer's theory of art is discussed.

Schopenhauer too speaks of the Ideas in terms suggesting that they are immanent, referring to them as existing in the things of this world (WWR I, 209), as being the essential and abiding element of the things of this world (WWR I, 184), and as constituting their innermost being (WWR I, 209f.). At times he even speaks as if having knowledge of Ideas is seeing things in a certain way, namely independently of the principle of sufficient reason (WWR I, 185; cf. WWR I, 196f.), though here again he must be taken to mean that it is *through* seeing things in this way that the Ideas expressed in them are apprehended, that things are seen as embodying Ideas (cf. Janaway 1994, 62–63): "Only *through* the pure contemplation described above . . . are the Ideas grasped" (WWR I, 185; italics added). At other times, however, he speaks of the Ideas in terms suggesting transcendence. Sensible particulars, he says, are very imperfect copies or pictures of Ideas (WWR I, 186; WWR II, 510); in fact Ideas are not in nature at all, nature having tried but failed to express them (WWR I, 186); Ideas do not enter into time and space (WWR I, 129); Ideas are *ante rem* unities or universals (WWR I, 234f.; WWR II, 366); Ideas are the timeless paradigms of natural things and complete in themselves (WWR I, 211); Ideas are the paradigms of which all other things are likenesses (WWR I, 130).

It follows from what has now been said that Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas are genuinely Platonic in their essential nature, in their diversely characterized relation to the things of this world, in what they are called upon to explain, in their manner of being apprehended, and in their contrast with the sensible world. What remains to consider is the restriction of them to the Ideas of natural species and forces, and the corresponding exclusion of the "mathematical Ideas" and "value Ideas" that occupy so prominent a position in Plato's middle dialogues – Ideas of the equal, odd, even, beauty, goodness and so on. It might be thought that this restriction and exclusion is due uniquely to Schopenhauer's theory of art, but there is more to it than that. It reflects many of his deepest beliefs.

2. The Exclusion of Mathematical Ideas

According to Plato, mathematical Ideas such as those of equal, odd and even, are objects of true knowledge, owing to the fact that geometry and arithmetic are knowledge of what "eternally is" as opposed to what "becomes and passes away" (*Republic*, 527b, 510c–511a). According to Schopenhauer, by contrast, while geometry is knowledge of space and arithmetic of time, neither of these "eternally is" in Plato's sense of the expression, because space and time are the Kantian forms of outer and inner sensibility, and so "belong to the subject" (WWR II, 33). "Mathematics considers the mere

forms, that is, time and space, in which the Ideas appear drawn apart into plurality for the knowledge of the subject as individual" (WWR I, 184). It follows that mathematical knowledge is knowledge, not of Platonic Ideas, but of the structures of the mathematician's own intellect.

This is straightforward enough, and even obvious from Schopenhauer's point of view, but there is another side to his account of mathematics that at first glance is neither obvious nor straightforward. Like Kant, he believes that we have non-sensible, pure intuition of space and time (FR, 193; WWR II, 49), and because of this he believes that real mathematical knowledge is itself intuitive. This in turn leads him to dismiss the use of demonstration in mathematics and vigorously to attack the methods of Euclid. Demonstration in geometry, he argues, is not real geometry, because it merely provides the grounds for the truth of judgments. It produces no insight into spatial relations, and leaves us with the feeling experienced when a conjurer produces something out of our pocket and leaves us with no idea how he has done it (cf. FR, 200). "The logical procedure of mathematics will be repugnant to genius, for it obscures real insight and does not satisfy it; it presents a mere concatenation of conclusions according to the principle of the ground of knowing" (WWR I, 189). Euclid's method, in short, is "a very brilliant piece of perversity" (WWR I, 70). It is only intuition, Schopenhauer insists, that affords us satisfaction, since it is only intuition that provides *insight* rather than the mere conviction produced by demonstration. "*Intuition* is not only the *source* of all knowledge [*Erkenntnis*], but is itself knowledge kat'exochèn [*par excellence*]; it alone is the unconditionally true genuine knowledge, fully worthy of the name. For it alone imparts *insight* proper [*eigentliche Einsicht*]" (WWR II, 77). According to Schopenhauer, therefore, in following Euclid's theorems we simply move from judgment to judgment, playing a sort of conceptual game without having any real grasp of the facts that each of those judgments expresses.

3. The Exclusion of Value Ideas

When we turn to considering Schopenhauer's exclusion of the other Ideas usually thought of as indispensably Platonic, in particular the Ideas of goodness and beauty so much to the fore in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, we need first to note that Schopenhauer's attack on demonstration in mathematics amounts to an attack on reasoning in general. This is because, however inconsistently, he takes all reasoning to be demonstrative or deductive (FR, 158), treating induction as a form of intuition (WWR I, 67). What lies behind his attack on reasoning, which he considers to be a process of passing from judgment to judgment, is his belief that concepts, the building-blocks of judgments, are acquired by abstraction from intuited objects and so are creations of the intellect; in fact they are doubly creations of the intellect, being "representations of representations" (FR, 145, WWR I, 40). What is more, because concepts are abstractions, they are largely empty of content and "wholly undetermined within their spheres" (WWR I, 234). Thus, while an individual dog or mental image of a dog has determinate size, color and shape, the concept of dog possesses neither these nor any other determinate qualities (FR, 152). It follows that concepts, and *eo ipso* judgments, furnish no access to reality: the faculty of reason "does not really extend

our knowledge, but merely gives it another form" (WWR I, 53). The importance of these points can hardly be exaggerated, since together they rule out all attempts to get at reality by means of reasoning, including philosophical reasoning. Philosophy itself, according to Schopenhauer, is an activity of the faculty of reason (PP I, 143), and so has concepts and judgments as its principal concern (WWR I, 410); in fact it consists in a set of judgments (WWR I, 82). On the other hand, like art and poetry, it "must have its source in an apprehension of the world through intuitive perception" (PP II, 9). But this is of no help, since what is given to the philosopher in intuition comprises only what is common to all of us: the external world, the forms of the intellect through which that world is apprehended, and "the consciousness of one's own self common to all" (WWR II, 611). Unless he is an artist, then, the philosopher has no special intuition of the Ideas (WWR I, 184f.; *pace* Taylor 1987, 49).

It might be objected that the Ideas of goodness and beauty could still be intuited by others, but this possibility is ruled out with derision by Schopenhauer on the grounds that the Ideas of goodness and beauty are only "pretended" Ideas: "Moreover, 'The Good, the True, and the Beautiful' are much in favour, especially with the sentimental and tender-hearted, as pretended Ideas, although they are simply three very wide and abstract concepts . . . like a thousand other *abstracta* of a similar kind" (FR, 169; cf. WWR I, 359–62). Later on Schopenhauer dismisses the "Idea of the good" itself with contempt, characterizing it as a set of empty words "clung to" by professors of philosophy and others of inferior intelligence (WWR II, 144f.); elsewhere he describes the *good*, as he does the *right*, as a pure negation (PP II, 292, 240–41).

Given his views on the nature of the will, together with his belief that Ideas are the "immediate and adequate" objectifications of the will, it is obvious why Schopenhauer would not want an Idea of good to enter into his scheme of things, since the will would then have to be seen as manifesting itself in a predominantly good world. In some respects, however, and notwithstanding all that has been said, it is less obvious why he does not make room for an Idea of beauty. For not only does he himself have a profound feeling for beauty, but he attaches immense importance to it in his account of art, asserting *inter alia* that human beauty is "the most complete objectification of the will" (WWR I, 223). More important, he believes that the artist's knowledge of the beautiful is in part *a priori* (WWR I, 222). In spite of these views, he does not believe that there is an Idea of beauty, and his most considered reason for this is that, unlike Plato (*Philebus*, 51c–d), he thinks of beauty as a purely *relational* property, the property of facilitating the contemplation of Ideas; and he does not believe that there are Ideas of relations (WWR I, 211). "With the beautiful," he asserts, "pure knowledge has gained the upper hand without a struggle, since the beauty of the object, in other words that quality of it that facilitates knowledge of its Idea, has removed from consciousness the will and the knowledge of relations that slavishly serve the will" (WWR I, 202; cf. WWR II, 539). On this view, then, when someone contemplates a beautiful work of art representing, say, a human scene, what he intuits is the Idea of mankind, the *essential* beauty of the work being nothing more than its ability to give rise to that intuition (WWR II, 422). Or when an artist contemplates a beautiful tree, while the tree reveals to him the nature of what it is to be a tree – that is, it reveals to him the Idea of tree – the tree's beauty as such reveals nothing further, since to say that the tree is beautiful is to say no more than that it reveals or expresses the Idea of tree. It follows that the

beauty of things in this world is not the expression of an Idea, but merely what facilitates the apprehension of such Ideas as there are.

Given that Schopenhauer limits his Ideas to the Ideas of forces and species in nature, we might have expected him to hold that the natural scientist is the one to intuit them. But his views on the limits of science preclude this. Science, he believes, is concerned solely with the spatio-temporal world of causally related material objects, its task lying in identifying the forces and species in nature and in discovering the causal regularities that govern changes in material objects. Science can go no further: it tells us "nothing more than the relation of one representation to another" (WWR I, 28, 177; but see WWR I, 21). It follows that scientific knowledge is altogether different from the knowledge whose object is the Ideas; in fact knowledge of Ideas demands a turning away from the concerns of science, indeed a turning away from everything subject to the principle of sufficient reason.

4. Schopenhauer's Justification of His Restriction of Ideas to Ideas in Nature

Schopenhauer is well aware that his restriction of Ideas to those revealed in nature might strike his readers as abandoning Plato and Platonism altogether, and because of this he attempts to justify it by appealing to ancient writers. In the passage where he declares Plato to be wrong in asserting that tables and chairs express the Ideas of table and chair, rather than simply the Ideas expressed in their material (WWR I, 211), he quotes Aristotle as saying that Plato himself would have allowed Ideas only of things in nature, and that according to the Platonists there are no Ideas of house and ring (WWR I, 211). At the same time he refers to Alcinous as saying that Plato's earliest followers denied that there exist Ideas of manufactured items such as shields or lyres, or of things opposed to nature like fever or cholera, or of individuals or of trifling things, *or of relations* (WWR I, 211, italics added). He also quotes the assertion of Diogenes Laertius that according to Plato the Ideas exist in nature, as it were as patterns, all other things resembling these and existing as their likenesses (WWR I, 130). Such references make plain that Schopenhauer believes his restriction of Ideas to those in nature to be in accordance with the considered teachings of Plato and his early followers (cf. WWR II, 365).

However, while he appeals to these ancient authorities, believing them to countenance the view that Platonic Ideas comprise only Ideas in nature, Schopenhauer surprisingly makes no appeal to Plato's own dialogues to support this latter claim. But there is at least one dialogue that he might profitably have turned to, at any rate on one reading of it, namely the *Timaeus*. This is an account of the origin, structure and contents of the universe (27c–28b, 92c) – of the visible, tangible "all" that "never really is, but is always coming to be and passing away" (27d–28c). In barest outline its teaching is that the universe is a living being containing many lesser living beings (30b–d), and that it was created by God or a god as a likeness of the Idea of the living being (30c–31a). This Idea embraces the more specific Ideas of the elements out of which the universe is made – fire, air, water, earth (31b–32c, 51b–c), existence, sameness and difference (35a–b, 41d) – and the Ideas of plants, birds, fish and animals, these last including men and gods (the stars and planets). What the *Timaeus* does, then, is account

for the universe and the ultimate components of the universe by treating them as likenesses of Ideas. It sees the universe as an aggregate of sensible particulars located in space and time, and it posits the existence of those and only those Ideas that these sensible particulars and their elements are likenesses of (51b–52b). It does not posit mathematical-Ideas or value-Ideas, nor does it explicitly indicate that these or their like should be taken for granted. The Ideas that it posits are those and only those that exist in nature.

Schopenhauer makes several references to the *Timaeus* in his third book of *The World as Will and Representation*, starting with a quotation (however inaccurate) on the book's title-page (WWR I, 167; cf. 170, 171, 172, 176), and, although he does not acknowledge the similarity, it soon emerges that the range of Ideas that he is to make use of corresponds closely to the range explicitly appealed to in the *Timaeus*. For Schopenhauer too accounts for the ultimate components of the universe by supposing them to be likenesses of Ideas – likenesses of the Ideas of plants, of non-human animals, of humans, and of the forces of nature (WWR I, 153, 167). Thus, like Plato in the *Timaeus* (again on one reading of that dialogue), he sees the universe as an aggregate of individuals located in space and time, and he invokes the existence of those and only those Ideas that these individuals and their elements are likenesses of.

There are further parallels between the views of Schopenhauer and those of Plato in the *Timaeus*. Schopenhauer holds that the Ideas are the proper objects of the artist's intuition, and what he says of the artist is markedly similar to what Plato says of the divine creator. Indeed the divine creator *is* an artist (see *Republic*, 596b–e). He is moreover an artist who looks to Ideas as models and subsequently copies them in his materials, which is precisely what Schopenhauer's artist does; and he is, like Schopenhauer's artist, a pure knower, possessing none of the narrow individuality that goes with the body. More important still, according to Plato in the *Timaeus* an artist's work is beautiful if and only if it is modeled upon the Ideas, modeled upon unchanging reality (*Timaeus*, 28a–b). But this in substance is what Schopenhauer holds: an artist's work (apart from the musician's) is beautiful if and only if it expresses, reveals or represents the Ideas (WWR I, 200–201, 210) and if the Ideas are recognized in it (WWR I, 209). Everything is beautiful because everything is the expression of an Idea (WWR I, 210).

It is worth pausing to note that Schopenhauer and his commentators make too much of Plato's strictures on the artist in the tenth book of the *Republic*. For in the *Phaedrus*, written well after the *Republic*, Plato praises poetry in language that is markedly similar to Schopenhauer's, particularly given Schopenhauer's own comparison of poetry to a kind of madness (WWR I, 190–91). "There is a third form of possession or madness, of which the Muses are the source. This seizes a gentle, pure soul and stimulates it to rapt passionate expression, especially in lyric poetry, glorifying the countless deeds of ancient times for the instruction of posterity" (*Phaedrus*, 245a). For Plato in the *Phaedrus*, then, the gift of the Muses, like the gift of Aphrodite leading to philosophy, is a form of divine madness (*Phaedrus*, 265b), and what he says in the *Phaedrus* should be compared with what he says in the *Symposium*, that poets like Homer or Hesiod are the begetters of wisdom and the rest of virtue (*Symposium*, 209a–d). At the same time it should be contrasted with Schopenhauer's seemingly unqualified judgment that Plato's greatest and best known error was his "disdain and rejection of art, *especially* poetry" (WWR I, 212; italics added).

While, then, there are many Platonic doctrines that Schopenhauer rejects, he is a great deal closer to Plato in his theory of art than is often allowed. It does not follow from this, however, that what he says on art is plausible in itself or even intelligible. This needs now to be considered.

5. Schopenhauer's Theory of Art Considered in Itself

Schopenhauer's theory of art, in what concerns its metaphysics and epistemology, has met with little sympathy in recent years, but the objections brought against it are less formidable than is often thought. It is said that the very notion of Platonic Ideas is incoherent (Hamlyn 1980, 122, 173), and that it is odd, to say the least, to suppose that artists intuit Platonic Ideas in everyday things while others intuit merely the everyday things themselves (Gardiner 1963, 204–207; Young 2005, 129ff.). It is said that while Schopenhauer appeals to Platonic Ideas to account for the existence of empirical species in nature, it is doubtful if there are such things; and, if there are, they are best accounted for by evolutionary theory (Magee 1997, 238–39). It is said finally that there is no single purpose to art, let alone the cognitive purpose of communicating Ideas; and that, even on the assumption that there are such things as Platonic Ideas, it is absurd to suggest that artists have special access to them.

The argument most frequently used to show that the notion of Platonic Ideas is incoherent rests on the assumption that the relation between Ideas and individuals is one of resemblance and that this involves a vicious regress. The thought behind this is that the relation of resemblance is symmetrical, so that if, to take an example, beautiful individuals resemble the Idea of beauty, the Idea of beauty correspondingly resembles its individuals and is therefore itself beautiful. But this, it is said, gives rise to a new "many," encompassing beautiful individuals and the Idea of beauty itself, so that a second Idea is needed, which in turn gives rise to a further "many," and so on to infinity. The simplest way to avoid this regress is to reject the assumption that the relation between Ideas and individuals is one of resemblance, hypothesizing if necessary that it is *sui generis*. Plato himself could not easily have done this, because there are prominent passages in his dialogues that demand resemblance if they are to make sense. One such passage is Diotima's account of love in the *Symposium*. There the lover is led to reflect on the beauty of individuals of various kinds in the course of his ascent to the Idea of beauty, but unless this Idea resembles the individuals in question, Diotima's account of love loses its point – the whole purpose of the lover's ascent being the contemplation of what itself is supremely beautiful.

Schopenhauer has no such passages demanding resemblance. It is true that he sometimes talks of individuals as copies of Ideas, a characterization that entails resemblance, but unlike Plato he has no need to characterize them in that way. At the same time, he at several points speaks of Ideas as constituting the *meaning* of individuals or of individuals as *expressing* Ideas (WWR I, 209–11). This is important because the relation between meanings and their expressions, familiar to us from language, does not entail a vicious regress and so allows Schopenhauer's theory to be stated coherently. But talk of Ideas as meanings is important for a further reason. It offers a way of making sense of Schopenhauer's crucial claim that Ideas are intuited. For meanings

are undoubtedly intuited; when we hear a speech, as Schopenhauer himself observes, "the meaning of the speech is immediately grasped, accurately and clearly apprehended" (WWR I, 39). At the same time meanings, like Ideas, are non-sensible entities, differing from what expresses them in belonging to no particular language, in having no determinate number of parts, and so on. It may be added that, on the assumption that Ideas are meanings, it seems less "eccentric" to think of artists as seeing something over and above what others see, since artists may now be compared to those who grasp the meaning of sentences that are heard but not understood by others. (For a contrasting view see Gardiner 1963, 204–207; Young 1987, 433–35; Young 2005, 129–32.)

Schopenhauer's assertion that it is the Ideas of species in nature that are intuited is objected to on the grounds that the division of the phenomenal world into the four categories of inorganic matter, plants, animals and human beings is not natural but "culturally dependent" (Magee 1997, 238–9; cf. Gardiner 1963, 210–11), but this objection is not persuasive. For, to make the point by means of an example, if we heard of intelligent creatures in the universe who did not classify the living species of human beings as distinct from the non-living species of atoms, or for that matter from the living species of giraffes, we should not unreasonably judge them to be mistaken, judge them to have failed, as Plato would say, to "carve reality at the joints." A related objection is that species, if we suppose there to be such things, do not stand in need of Platonic Ideas because they are accounted for by evolution, but this is to attribute greater power to the theory of evolution than it possesses. For the theory of evolution explains the origin of species but not their ontological standing once they are in being: it does not explain that there is a diversity of species now, whatever their origins, rather than a chaos of dissimilar individuals; nor does it explain that this or that individual belongs now to this or that species rather than to some other. In short, the theory of evolution offers no solution to the problem of "the one and the many" that Platonic Ideas were introduced to deal with in the first place, a problem that transcends origins and applies to the constitution of things in timeless universes as much as in our own. By contrast, once the existence of Platonic Ideas is granted, the Idea of mankind, to take that as an example, is able to explain that at this or that moment a number of individuals are men, whatever their origins, while the Ideas of man, horse, dog and the rest are able jointly to explain that the world contains a diversity of species rather than one. It is worth adding that, in so far as the Idea of mankind is able successfully to explain that there are individual men in existence now, it is likewise able to explain the evolution of *homo sapiens*: the Idea of man is timelessly such that, if it is exemplified, the empirical species *homo sapiens* evolves, just as the Idea of man is such that, if it is exemplified, individuals "evolve" from birth to maturity and beyond. The unchangeability of Ideas does not entail unchangeability in their instances; on the contrary, Ideas are needed to explain regularities in the ways that instances change.

If, as has now been argued, it is at least intelligible to suppose that there are Platonic Ideas exemplified as species in nature and to suppose that these Ideas are intuited, it does not follow that the claim that artists intuit them and express them in their works is intelligible. Given the limited aims of the present discussion, no attempt will be made to evaluate that claim in detail or to argue for the prior claim that the diverse forms of

art have a common purpose. But a brief test may be made of Schopenhauer's theory of art in respect of its metaphysical and epistemological foundations, by seeing if it makes sense when applied to what Schopenhauer considers to be the highest form of art (apart from music), namely poetic drama (WWR I, 251–53; cf. WWR II, 427).

Few would wish to deny that great works of poetic drama "express" human nature, if by this is meant that they convey to the world "the most thorough knowledge of human nature," to make use of Jane Austen's description of the novel. But, for this to come about, the dramatists must themselves be in possession of that knowledge, and it is precisely such a possession that Schopenhauer attributes to them (WWR II, 420). At the same time, he insists that the knowledge in question is intuitive (WWR II, 376), meaning that it is not the sort of knowledge to be gained through the enquiries of psychologists or others of the sort. In this he is surely right. We have only to compare a psychologist's treatise on ambition, irresolution and superstition with Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to see his point. What in summary Schopenhauer holds, then, is that while psychologists and others conceptualize and draw conclusions, the dramatic artist has and conveys genuine insight into human nature: he sees human nature in its many varieties and aspects, just as the true geometer sees the nature of space in its many figures and relations. On the assumption that there is a thing in reality called human nature, this is not altogether fanciful.

6. Irresoluble Conflicts between Plato and Schopenhauer

No conflicts have been considered so far between Plato and Schopenhauer, at any rate no conflicts that are incapable of resolution. But there are such conflicts, epistemological, axiological and ontological (see Hein 1966, *passim*).

Plato, it will be recalled, often speaks of Ideas as objects of simple intuitive knowledge and contemplation, but in the *Republic* he begins to speak of them as objects of dialectic too. Dialectic he describes as a systematic and rational enquiry, preceded by long mathematical studies, giving an account of what each Idea is, meeting all objections, challenging all hypotheses, and finally arriving at a non-hypothetical principle (*Republic*, 531e–535a). Above all he sees it as discerning interrelations among Ideas, which are the objects of reason (*Republic*, 509d; cf. *Timaeus*, 51d–52a), and these as forming a single complex whole under the Idea of the good (*Republic*, 509d–511e, 537c). In later dialogues he no longer speaks of this single whole, but his commitment to dialectic does not diminish. On the contrary, he becomes increasingly convinced that dialectic constitutes the sovereign method of philosophy, focusing more and more upon the need to establish precise relations among Ideas, or among the kinds that objectively correspond to Ideas, albeit piecemeal and in circumscribed areas (*Phaedrus*, 264e–266b; *Statesman*, 262a–263b; *Philebus*, 15d–17a; *Sophist*, 249e–259e). In brief, the more Plato thinks about philosophy, the more he sees it as dialectic, as a synoptic vision or partial vision of the complex nature of reality, a vision as genuine as the insight of Schopenhauer's geometer into the complex nature of space.

Schopenhauer, on the other hand, although he asserts that the Ideas are graded objectifications of the will, treats them as unconnected objects of simple intuition. His

artist, who alone has adequate knowledge of them (WWR I, 184f.), shows no interest in submitting them to reason, none in giving an account of what each of them is, and none in relating them to one another. Nor is this a matter of chance, as though the artist might have used his reason in these ways if only he had been inclined to do so. As was emphasized earlier, reason according to Schopenhauer deals uniquely with concepts and judgments, as a result of which it is purely formal, able to provide nothing material from its own resources, no information about reality (FR, 171f.). It follows that the employment of reason in attempting to gain knowledge of the Platonic Ideas would be as futile and "repugnant to genius" as its employment in geometry. Schopenhauer's notion of reasoning consequently constitutes a total rejection of Plato's developed notion of philosophy.

A second irresoluble conflict between Plato and Schopenhauer stems from the fact that Plato judges the Ideas to be of the highest conceivable worth. They dwell, he says, not only beyond the earth but beyond the habitation of the gods; they are holy realities, abiding in a holy place; they are the source of the gods' very divinity; they induce in men even towards their images the kind of awe and reverence that is characteristic of worship; they make up the reality that affords nourishment, satisfaction and contentment to the gods (*Phaedrus*, 247c–251a); they are the sole objects of the philosopher's passionate love and yearning (*Phaedo*, 66b–67b). At the same time they are responsible for this world's being as good and as beautiful as is possible within the constraints of "necessity" (*Timaeus*, 29a–30c, 47e–48b), containing a diversity of goods that are worth pursuing for their own sakes and are sufficient for the achievement of happiness even in this life (*Republic*, 357b–367e, 580b–588a; *Philebus*, 50e–59c; *Gorgias*, 461b–508b).

What Schopenhauer has to say is different indeed. The best thing for a human being, according to his teaching, is to be delivered from the whole world and to pass into nothingness (albeit a "*nihil privativum*") (WWR I, 408–409). But the Ideas themselves are part of the whole world: they constitute the world as representation in its second aspect (WWR I, 167). They are in addition the adequate objectifications of a will that manifests itself through their intermediary in a life where nothing is clear except its misery and vanity, a life where earthly happiness is destined to be frustrated and where there is nothing but strife, pain, boredom and thwarted desire (PP II, 291ff.; WWR II, 164, 573). It is true that the contemplation of Ideas affords men a measure of fleeting happiness and satisfaction, but this is no evidence of intrinsic worth, since the happiness and satisfaction that they afford is negative; it is pain alone that is the positive (PP II, 416). In the end, then, the most that can be said with certainty in evaluating the Ideas is that they provide relief from pain and a brief escape from the slavery of the will. A stark contrast to the teaching of Plato.

A third irresoluble conflict, this time of a profound ontological sort, arises from Plato's being a pluralist, Schopenhauer a monist. In his major dialogues Plato considers Ideas and sensible particulars to be irreducible components of reality, and he characterizes the relation between the two as one of cause and effect, a relation that entails duality. In the *Republic*, for example, he portrays the Idea of the good as the generating cause of the other Ideas (*Republic*, 509b, 517c) and as being in a way the cause of everything else (*Republic*, 516b), while in the *Phaedo* he explains at length that the Ideas are the causes of all that is determinate in the sensible world (*Phaedo*, 99d–102a).

Schopenhauer, in seeming denial of the contrast that he draws between Ideas and sensible particulars, is a monist. "The whole world," he says, "with all its phenomena is the objectivity of the one and indivisible will" (WWR I, 158) – by which he means, not that the world is an object produced by the will, but that it is the will itself, the will presented as object (WWR I, 169). Even if, as he sometimes suggests in his later writings, the thing-in-itself is a reality beyond the will, possessing properties and modes of existence unknowable to us, this does not mean to say that the thing-in-itself is not one with the rest of reality: on the contrary, it is still "that which we know most immediately in the will," still that which "manifests itself as will" (WWR II, 198).

Schopenhauer specifically rejects the idea that there are, or could be, causal relations to be found outside of the spatio-temporal world. He does this because he takes the Kantian view that causality is a category (in fact for the later Schopenhauer the sole category) of the understanding, and he asserts that it applies uniquely to changes of state within the world of space and time. It follows that to talk of Ideas as causing other Ideas, or as causing characteristics of sensible particulars, is nonsensical. It is even more nonsensical to talk of the thing-in-itself as causing this world, and Schopenhauer accordingly takes Kant to task for doing so (WWR I, 436). It is for these and related reasons that Schopenhauer believes the "whole world" to constitute a single reality – "will and representation." And it is this that leads him in turn to talk of tunneling beneath representational reality as we might tunnel beneath the walls of a city and of coming up on the inside (FR, 119f.; cf. WWR I, 103ff.), of acts of will and observable behavior as not connected by the bond of causality but as being identical, albeit given in different ways (WWR I, 100), or of my body as being nothing but the will itself in so far as this is object of perception (WWR I, 107). He could have said analogous things of the will and what *ex hypothesi* lies beyond it.

In considering reality to be one, Schopenhauer is committed *nolens volens* to the view that Platonic Ideas and sensible particulars are ontologically, though not epistemically, one. Plato would vigorously have rejected any such view. He would likewise have rejected the view, to which Schopenhauer is also committed, that the Ideas – for Plato the objects of the philosopher's love and yearning – are one with a self-conflicting will that merits denial and ultimate nullification (WWR I, 146ff., 252ff., 394). Whether or not Plato would have rejected the view that the Ideas are one with a reality beyond all knowing is less certain.

See also 3 Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics; 12 Schopenhauer's Theory of Architecture; 13 The Artist as Subject of Pure Cognition; 15 Schopenhauer and the Objectivity of Art.

Notes

1 For the expression of surprise or puzzlement, see Copleston (1946, 105–106); Gardiner (1963, 203–206); Hamlyn (1980, 103); Hein (1966, 144); Janaway (1989, 277–78); Magee (1997, 239); Young (2005, 132); but see Chansky (1988, *passim*) and cf. Janaway (1989, 9–10); Janaway (1994, 61–62); Janaway (1996, 39–41).

2 Translations of Plato's works are my own.

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10

Schopenhauer's *On the Will in Nature*

The Reciprocal Containment of Idealism and Realism

ROBERT WICKS

After a 17-year publication silence since the appearance of *The World as Will and Representation* (1819), Schopenhauer presented his readers with *On the Will in Nature* in 1836.[1] He was living in Frankfurt and at the age of 48 had recently put behind him some frustrating years in Berlin where he had failed to achieve recognition as a university professor and philosopher. Although he was an older man, he was starting life afresh, having moved to Frankfurt only a few years earlier with a view towards quiet study, writing and a regular life. This indeed came to pass, for *On the Will in Nature* marked the first publication in a list that included his substantial essays "On the Freedom of the Will" (1839) and "On the Basis of Morality" (1840), along with his books, *The World as Will and Representation*, Volume II (1844) and *Parerga and Paralipomena* (1851) – the work that finally brought him the fame he had been seeking throughout his life.

Aware of advances in the sciences since the publication of *The World as Will and Representation* (*WWR*) Schopenhauer composed *On the Will in Nature* (*WN*) as a kind of self-vindication, hoping to document how new scientific discoveries since 1819 were corroborating his metaphysics. He expresses this intent in *WN*'s lengthy subtitle: "a discussion of the confirmations from the empirical sciences that the author's philosophy has received since its first appearance." As confirmations, he introduces facts from a variety of subjects that include plant and animal physiology, comparative anatomy and astronomy, all of which reflected his abiding interest in science that extended back to his university days in Göttingen and Berlin.

Such is the familiar account of *WN* that originates with Schopenhauer himself. As accurate as it is, it leaves one with the impression that *WN* substantially contains, and devotes itself virtually exclusively, to an inventory of scientific citations that confirm Schopenhauer's leading metaphysical claim that the inner being of the natural world coincides with our own inner being, and that by becoming aware of our inner being, we can become aware of what everything is in itself. The core of this awareness, Schopenhauer calls "Will" – the driving energy that he discovers deep within himself:

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> *that* accordingly . . . even in inorganic Nature, crystallization, and in general every primary force which manifests itself in physical and chemical phenomena . . . – that all this, I say, in itself . . . is absolutely identical [*geradezu identisch*] with the *will* we find within us and know as intimately as we can know anything.
>
> (WN, 217)

> I show that active principle in all fundamental forces of Nature to be absolutely identical [*schlechthin identisch*] with what is known to us within ourselves as the Will.
>
> (WN, 305)

> Nor indeed can any other road ever lead to this but the insight, that the active and impulsive force in Nature which presents this perceptible world to our intellect, is identical [*identisch*] with the will within us.
>
> (WN, 373)

The last excerpt above is from a later chapter in *WN* entitled "Reference to Ethics," and its location indicates how the discussions in *WN* extend beyond the scientific confirmation of Schopenhauer's metaphysical theory into less quantitatively oriented disciplines. *WN* accordingly includes a brief chapter on linguistics, an unexpected chapter on Sinology (Chinese studies), and a long chapter on animal magnetism and magic. This variety of topics anticipates what Schopenhauer will publish eight years later in the supplementary volume to *WWR*, and 15 years later in *Parerga and Paralipomena* (*PP*) both of which range across many non-scientific themes. Since these latter chapters reinforce Schopenhauer's theory with ideas that stem from other areas, it is more accurate to regard *WN*'s project as the more general one of showing how his philosophy coheres with an assortment of scientific observations, linguistic facts, religious beliefs, contemporary psychological theories and magical practices throughout the ages.

The arrangement of chapter headings in *WN* is useful to set forth here at the outset: 1. Introduction, 2. Physiology and Pathology, 3. Comparative Anatomy, 4. Physiology of Plants, 5. Physical Astronomy, 6. Linguistics, 7. Animal Magnetism and Magic, 8. Sinology, 9. Reference to Ethics, 10. Conclusion.

WN thematically divides in half at the end of the chapter 5, which is nominally on astronomy, but which actually covers inorganic nature in general. Chapters 2 to 5 aim to corroborate Schopenhauer's metaphysics in reference to more factually centered scientific themes; chapters 6 to 9 aim to corroborate the same, but refer more expansively to assorted historical, cultural and value-related themes that reinforce the claims of *WN*'s first half.

1. Non-Scientific Confirmations of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics in "The Wisdom Deposited in Language," Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism, Animal Magnetism and Magic

Schopenhauer's observations in the chapter on linguistics are brief and can be mentioned here at the outset. He observes that "a good deal of wisdom is deposited in language," and that across the world, many languages contain anthropomorphic phrases

that employ the term "will" to describe inorganic nature. We sometimes say colloquially, for instance, that the water wanted to surge over the levee, or that the steam tried to escape from the pipe. In Schopenhauer's view, these types of commonly-occurring phrases are neither accidents, nor mere metaphors, nor descriptive inaccuracies, but instead indicate a shared perception, if only subliminal, that underlying physical phenomena, there is an unconscious will that drives the water to surge, the steam to escape, etc.

Needless to say, we can identify common phrases that express alternative perspectives and sometimes, simple confusions. For instance, we can refer to ourselves dualistically as minds that have bodies, or more simply and more integratedly, as persons. We refer to "fists" and "laps" as things, but they are in fact actions. People often say that "nothing" is in the box, or on the chair, as if "nothing" were a "something." There may be a good deal of wisdom deposited in ordinary language, as Schopenhauer observes, but it comes along with a good deal of ambiguity and confusion.

Schopenhauer's chapter on Sinology is historically valuable for its numerous references to authors who he recommends as authorities in Asian thought (some of the references predate 1836; some were added in later editions). Among these are Robert Spence Hardy (1803–1868) and Isaac Jacob Schmidt (1779–1847), both of whom guided Schopenhauer's thinking on Buddhism.

Robert Spence Hardy was a Wesleyan missionary who lived in Sri Lanka from 1825 to 1845, and is known for his books, *Eastern Monachism – Account of the Origin, Laws, Discipline, Sacred Writings, Mysterious Rites, Religious Ceremonies, and Present Circumstances of the Order of Mendicants founded by Gautama Buddha* (1850) and *A Manual of Buddhism in its Modern Development* (1853). The composer Richard Wagner (1813–1883) is among those influenced by this chapter; he read *WN* in 1855 and it led him to consult Spence Hardy's books on Buddhism.

Isaac Jacob Schmidt was a Dutch orientalist who, while living in Russia, focused his studies on Mongolia and Tibet. Schopenhauer refers to Schmidt's translation of the *Sutra on the Wise Man and the Fool* (1843) [*Xianyu-jing*, c. 445 CE], a series of lectures Schmidt presented at the Academy of St. Petersburg (1829–1832), and a set of articles from 1828 to 1829: "On the Relation between the Gnostic-Theosophic Doctrines and Buddhism" (1828), "Investigations concerning Tibetans and Mongols" (1829), and "History of the Eastern Mongols" (1829).

Schopenhauer's stated purpose in the Sinology chapter is to show his readers a quotation that contains the concept of *Ti'en* (often translated as "heaven") and which bears a strong resemblance to his own philosophy. Along the path to examining the quote, he sketches the contents of Chinese animistic religion, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The latter two religions are his favorites, and he condemns Confucianism for its lack of metaphysical interests.

These are preliminary expositions, however, since Schopenhauer's aim is to establish doubly that the concept of *Ti'en* is consistent with his metaphysics, and that a specific quote describing *Ti'en* as expressive of a Will that permeates nature – although it refers explicitly to "Will" – was unknown to him and did not stand as an inspirational insight. Quoting from the *Asiatic Journal* (Anonymous 1826, 42), Schopenhauer presents the views of the pre-eminent twelfth-century Neo-Confucian scholar, Zhu Xi (1130–1200) (also known as: Chu Hsi; Choo-hi; Chu Yüan-hui; Choo-foo-tze; Chu-fu-tse):

> "According to one of their authorities, *Teen* is call'd ruler or sovereign (Choo), from the idea of the supreme control, and another expresses himself thus: 'Had heaven (Teen) no designing mind, then it must happen, that the cow might bring forth a horse, and on the peach-tree be produced the blossom of the pear.' On the other hand it is said, that *the mind of Heaven is deducible from what is the Will of mankind!*"
>
> (WN, 369–70; italics and quotation marks in original)

The last sentence's phrasing attracted Schopenhauer's attention, since it refers explicitly to "Will." In Zhu Xi's actual writings we encounter the closely related, but less specific idea that the basic principle of the universe is fully present in each individual, just as "there is only one moon in the sky but when its light is scattered upon rivers and lakes, it can be seen everywhere" (Chan 1963, 638). We also find the idea that the essences of individual things precede the existences of those individuals, similar to Schopenhauer's claim that Platonic Ideas are the immediate objectifications of the Will. Also consistent with Schopenhauer, Zhu Xi maintains that the basic principle of the universe does not have a self-conscious mind, but rather acts automatically and unconsciously.

These thought-provoking parallelisms are valuable from the standpoint of comparative philosophy, but the respective intellectual atmospheres of Schopenhauer's metaphysics and Zhu Xi's are opposed, if only because Zhu Xi's basic principle of the universe does not precipitate a world permeated with pointless misery. Nor does he prescribe extreme resignation as a means to enlightenment. Schopenhauer's and Zhu Xi's philosophies are similar to some extent, but since their differences compare to those between Schopenhauer's philosophy and pantheism or Neo-Platonism, his concerns about being accused of having plagiarized the key thoughts of a leading Chinese philosopher were probably unwarranted.

The long chapter on magic and animal magnetism adds to the exotic quality of *WN*, notwithstanding Schopenhauer's effort to demystify the phenomena. We no longer recognize animal magnetism as a genuine natural force, but during Schopenhauer's time, the notion of a special magnetic energy unique to living things (conceived upon analogy to magnetic forces in inorganic physics) had not yet seen its final days. Postulated initially by Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815), animal magnetism was believed to be a force that could be intensified or diminished within an infirm person's body to alleviate disease. The techniques for modifying the flow of animal magnetism were the forerunners of those used in hypnosis, and it soon became commonly accepted that the effects of mesmerism were not due to animal magnetism, but due to one person's exerting his/her will over another. Such was the opinion, for example, of the Indo-Portuguese monk, Abbé Faria (José Custódio de Faria) (1746–1819) who was among the first to reframe Mesmer's views. Consistent with Faria's departure from Mesmer, Schopenhauer cites a number of other writers who replace explanations containing references to animal magnetism with ones couched in terms of willpower. This increasing appeal to willpower within the discussions of animal magnetism, he observes, coheres with his own metaphysical view that Will is at the basis of everything.

Schopenhauer specifically accounts for animal magnetism – not to mention psychokinesis and clairvoyance – through the Will's acting as the world's essence. His hypothesis is that if we expand our awareness to coincide with the wider presence of the Will

as a whole, then non-causal, metaphysical connections become realizable between ourselves and potentially anything else in the universe:

> apart from the outer connection between the phenomenon of this world on which the *nexus physicus* is founded, there must exist another besides, passing through the very essence in itself of all things: a subterranean connection as it were, by means of which immediate action was possible from *one* point of the phenomena on to every other point, through a *nexus metaphysicus* . . . however the partition walls of individuation and separation might be, they might nevertheless occasionally permit a communication to take place as it were behind the scenes, or like a secret game under the table.
>
> (WN, 340)

Schopenhauer accounts for magical phenomena along the same lines, observing how magic essentially supposes that a person's mere strength of will can change the course of events, in the manner of an action at a distance. He writes:

> Now, from what they say, it clearly follows, that the real agent in Magic, just as in Animal Magnetism, is nothing but *the will*. Here I must quote some passages in support of this assertion. Theophrastus Paracelsus especially discloses perhaps more concerning the inner nature of Magic than any other writer, and does not even hesitate to give a minute description of the processes used in it. – He says: "To be observed concerning wax images: if I bear malice in my will against anyone, that malice must be carried out by some medium or *corpus*. Thus it is possible for my spirit to stab or wound another person without help from my body in using a sword, merely by my *fervent desire*. Therefore it is also possible for me to convey my opponent's spirit into the image by my *will* and then to deform or paralyze it at pleasure."
>
> (WN, 347)

Schopenhauer's interest in animal magnetism, magic and parapsychology might seem auxiliary to *WN*'s main project, but these topics involve the general question of how the supernatural and the natural are related. If we refer instead to the "supersensible" instead of to the supernatural, the philosophical connection to Kant's transcendental idealism becomes clear, for Kant's theory of space and time quietly structures the discussions of magic and animal magnetism. At one point, he invokes Kant's theory explicitly when he explains how types of extra-sensory perception such as clairvoyance are possible: the clairvoyant's power stems from his/her having suspended the influence of time, and having thereby acquired the ability to apprehend the past, present and future at once, experiencing the future as if it were happening now (PP II, 43).[2] The speculations extend to suggest that Jesus's ability to perform miracles stemmed from his having transcended the forms of space and time, such as to bring him into direct contact with the Will. This gave Jesus the power to act in a more universalistic manner, just as the Will itself acts (PP II, 383).

This reference to Jesus marks the respectable theoretical location that Schopenhauer assigns to magic as one of three species of sympathy (*Sympathie*), namely, compassion (*Mitleid*), romantic love (*amor*) and magic (*Magie*). Characterizing sympathy generally as "the empirical appearance of the will's metaphysical identity, through the physical multiplicity of its phenomenon" (WWR II, 602), Schopenhauer inspects the field of

human experience to locate instances where our sights are directed beyond natural phenomena to the unitary realm of the supersensible. In this respect, compassion, romantic love and magic serve the same appearance-transcending purpose that, within Kant's philosophy, the sublime and the works of artistic genius serve.

2. Scientific Confirmations of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics in Plant and Animal Physiology, Comparative Anatomy and Physical Astronomy

Having now considered some of the more esoteric aspects of *WN*, we can turn to that segment of the text which more directly concerns Schopenhauer's eagerness to cite scientific data in corroboration of his metaphysics. In the initial chapter, "Physiology and Pathology," he begins with a "striking confirmation" of his metaphysics in the views of Dr. Joachim Dietrich Brandis (1762–1846), a Professor of Medicine in Kiel, and private physician to the Danish royal family. In his writings on physiology, Brandis referred centrally to an unconscious and insatiable "will without representation" that is the primary force of all life, speaking precisely in Schopenhauerian terms. This outstanding coincidence in phrasing resonated well with Schopenhauer, and in *WN* he introduced the reader to Brandis's writings as the first solid corroboration of his metaphysics.

Unfortunately, Schopenhauer realized after the 1836 publication of *WN* that Brandis had already been familiar with *WWR* and had appropriated his ideas without having mentioned their original source. This led Schopenhauer to conclude in *WN*'s second edition, with obvious annoyance, that Brandis's writings constitute merely an application and repetition, rather than a corroboration of his doctrine. In tune with his discussion of Brandis, Schopenhauer unmasked yet another appropriator of his views, Professor Anton Rosas (1791–1855), Professor of Ophthalmology of the University of Vienna, who, although mentioning Schopenhauer in passing, adopted his phrases exactly and numerously. The main example cited is Rosas's *Textbook of Ophthalmology* (1830) where passages are matched with those from "On Vision and Colors" (1816).

Turning to the positive side, *WN* mentions examples of physiological phenomena that indicate how a single force underlies all animal functions. These are typically phenomena that resist intellectual efforts to draw a sharp distinction between "voluntary" and "involuntary" actions. Breathing is the best-known of these, but Schopenhauer draws our attention to emotional states, the complicated mix of voluntary and involuntary movements involved in bodily actions, along with some experiments that describe how the eyes dilate under certain circumstances.

His aim – here and in the succeeding chapters (viz., "Comparative Anatomy," "Physiology of Plants" and "Physical Astronomy") – is to cite statements by scientists that are consistent with, or suggestive of, the idea that the world is the expression of a universal will. A passage from Schopenhauer's notebooks of 1823–1824 (and reiterated in *WN*, as we shall see below) conveys this basic theme well, here in reference to inorganic nature: "Look at the torrent tumbling over the rocks and ask yourself whether this rushing and roaring can take place without an exertion of force, and whether an *exertion of force* is conceivable without *will*" (MR III, 187).[3]

Moving next to comparative anatomy, Schopenhauer reveals the will that underlies animal existence by interpreting the anatomical form of any animal as expressive of what the animal unconsciously wants. The anteater wants to eat ants, for instance, and so its form appropriately has long claws, a cylindrical muzzle, a small mouth and a sticky, threadlike tongue. The ants are the motive and the anteater's archetypical form is the timeless act of will that is geared to that motive. In view of such motives – and here we see sharply how the Will feasts on itself – the interior quality of will determines the exterior anatomical form, which is an exterior "calculated throughout, down to the minutest detail, for the purpose of destroying some other animal" (WN, 267). Schopenhauer adds that with respect to the animal's form, "nothing superfluous, nothing deficient, nothing inappropriate, nothing insufficient or incomplete of its kind, can therefore be found in it" (WN, 276). His position recognizes a universal fitness of means to ends, a "will" that wills these arrangements, purposes to be observed, but no consciousness, no intelligence, and hence, no God that is involved as the supremely planning intellect.

Such assertions issue from Schopenhauer's advocacy of a monistic metaphysics of Will that leaves little room for contingencies. Since everything is the Will's objectification, there is nothing foreign to stand in the Will's way, so whatever the Will wills, simply happens, much as how God wills something into existence.

Considering plant physiology in turn, Schopenhauer conceives of plants in the manner of the rushing water in the above quotation, claiming that plant behavior reveals how a will operates within them, as can be seen (among a number of his examples) in how creeping plants twist and turn to find their way to supports with which they are not in contact. Noting that plants lack a consciousness and an intellect, Schopenhauer adds that they express their will through their capacity to react to stimuli. Throughout these discussions, it is worth noting that plant movements and animal behavior admit of many interpretations, and that Schopenhauer often blurs the distinction between the multiply-interpretable behavior itself and the scientists who interpret the behavior specifically in reference to a will.

Schopenhauer recommended his chapter on "Physical Astronomy" as an excellent representative of his doctrine's main ideas (WWR II, 191). Within *WN*'s expositional sequence, it serves on the face of things to complete his account of the Will in nature, for at this point he has passed from animals ("comparative anatomy") to plants ("physiology of plants"), and has arrived at inorganic nature, in reference to which he claims to have been "the first who has asserted that a *will* must be attributed to all that is lifeless and inorganic" (WN, 309).

The chapter on physical astronomy stimulates the question of why Schopenhauer identified it as central, since it contains few arguments *per se* and much of its contents are familiar from *WWR*. In lieu of his standard arguments, he describes a process of philosophical reflection, identifies an emerging mystery, and then offers a solution to the mystery – one that he is convinced is unique to his philosophy. Specifically, he observes that in the paradigm cases of mechanical causality, the relationship between cause and effect is easily understood, such as when one billiard ball hits another. The ease resides in knowing what causes the second ball to move, since we see the first ball hit it. Schopenhauer then continues up the hierarchy from inorganic beings, to plants, to animals, and observes how it becomes increasingly difficult to identify the operative

elements in causal relationships. When we arrive at human beings, the relationships often become mysterious to the observer, since a private thought – which is not observable if one is not that person – can motivate someone's behavior. Upon noting this decreasing perspicuity of causal relationships when moving from inorganic beings, to plants, to animals, to humans, there arises the temptation to believe that in the case of humans, mechanical causality admits of gaps or discontinuities, and that a free will has suddenly become present that can initiate causal sequences *ex nihilo* from within.

Schopenhauer regards such a free will as an illusion, and searches instead for the ultimate ground of nature's thoroughgoing mechanism. He discovers this in his act of introspection, where he encounters his will at the core of his activity. Realizing that his will underlies his behavior – not as individual acts of free will, but as a single, constantly driving force – Schopenhauer infers that the same sort of will underlies the behavior of animals, plants, and ultimately, inorganic matter. With this, he works his way back down the natural hierarchy to arrive at what he believes to be the inner nature of causality in inorganic nature. An upshot is his claim that acts of will do not cause subsequent actions, but that willing and acting are one and the same.

Such is Schopenhauer's vision in the chapter on physical astronomy. He observes that he cannot understand the inner nature of things from the outside, discovers that he can understand the inner nature of himself, extends this knowledge to understand the inner nature of the rest of the world, and then explains the outer nature of things in reference to that inner nature.

3. The Independence of Will from Intellect

Many Western philosophers follow Plato in supposing that rationality or intellect should prevail over the will in the context of daily life, and assume that reason is at the core of things. This coheres with accepting God's existence, where one defines God as a purely rational being. At a more mundane level, but in the same intellectual spirit, a common conception of deliberate action follows suit: we first formulate a conscious plan or intention, and then exercise our will to carry out the plan. Here, the intellect dominates over will, and the will serves merely as a vehicle to actualize preconceived, consciously formulated plans.

Schopenhauer reorders the above relationships, claiming that the will is not only more fundamental within the human psyche, but, as we have seen, that it also grounds the anatomical structures of plants, animals and people. In those cases of less complex animals, such as worms, it is fair to say that there is no intellect at all, and that will operates without intellect. At the level of inorganic matter, where there is no consciousness, Schopenhauer similarly maintains that a will underlies the natural phenomena. The complete separation of will and intellect is, so he states, the "fundamental truth" of his doctrine (WN, 236).

This implies that the will need not (and usually does not) act under the guidance of knowledge, and that its purposes are unconsciously determined. The essence of any particular being – whether it happens to be a mineral, plant, animal or human – precedes the existence of the individual thing, but this priority of the timeless archetype does *not*, for Schopenhauer, imply that there is a conscious mind or intelligence in

which these essences inhere as designs. For him, the will acts unconsciously, and there is no reason why it does so.

Schopenhauer critically applies his position that will precedes intellect to the writings of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829), ascribing to Lamarck the view that the constant exertions of an animal's will account for the emergence and development of animal characteristics. The necks of giraffes became elongated, for example, as a result of the giraffe's continual desire to extend its head to greater heights. Schopenhauer compliments Lamarck for having employed the notion of an animal's will at the crux of his explanations and genuinely respects him as a kindred philosophical spirit. He also criticizes him by asking how the animals in question were able to survive long enough from generation to generation to allow enough time for the desired characteristics to emerge, assuming that the animals' survival depended upon their having those characteristics to begin with. As an alternative that is both more radical and more consistent, Schopenhauer maintains that an animal's will resides outside of time (and hence, prior to the physical animal), and that the animal's form directly manifests the quality of that will, as we have seen above in the anteater example.

4. The Will as Kant's "Thing-in-Itself"

Schopenhauer is recognized for his assertion that the inner nature of the world is directly apprehensible and that it can be called "Will." This Will, so he claims, can be equated with what Kant referred to as the "thing-in-itself" (i.e., ultimate reality). In Kant's view, the thing-in-itself is unknowable in every sense of the word. Schopenhauer agrees that it is unknowable in so far as it is inaccessible to logical, conceptual, mathematical or scientific modes of knowledge, and to this extent he concurs with Kant that the thing-in-itself is unknowable.

Schopenhauer adds that we can nonetheless directly apprehend the thing-in-itself as it is present within us. This is not a species of empirical knowledge in his opinion; it is a special type of knowledge that he calls "philosophical" (WWR I, § 18). Now this admission creates some tension, since *any* apprehension, direct or indirect, of something external or internal, must take place in time, and hence, must count as empirical knowledge according to Kant. By acknowledging the presence of time in our apprehension of the Will, Schopenhauer's position consequently appears to collapse into the view that we cannot know the thing-in-itself as it is "in itself," but can know it only in a temporal form. We would consequently know it only as it appears to us, not as it is in itself, and hence, not as it really is. However, if we can know the thing-in-itself only as it appears, it becomes implausible to maintain that the thing-in-itself "in itself" is Will, which is Schopenhauer's leading claim.

A preliminary question, then, is how Schopenhauer himself conceived of the equation of the thing-in-itself with Will. If we use *WN* as an indicator, the answer is clear: he maintained that there is an identity between Will and Kant's thing-in-itself, and that if there is any distortion involved in our apprehension of it in a temporal form, then this distortion is negligible. He continually speaks as if the thing-in-itself and the Will are the same, as we can see in the following:

> the mysterious *x* in the process, the real innermost core of it, the true agent, the *in-itself* of all phenomena – which after all, is only given us as representation and according to the forms and laws of representation – is essentially one and the same [*wesentlich das Selbe*] with what is known to us immediately and intimately as *the will* in the actions of our body, which body is likewise given us as intuition and representation.
>
> (WN, 320)

> Now, as Kant has taught us, causality is nothing but the form of the understanding itself, knowable *a priori*: that is, the essence of representation as such, which is one side of the world; the other side is *will*: which is the thing in itself.
>
> (WN, 321)

> my proposition: that the Will is what Kant calls the "thing in itself" or the ultimate substratum of every phenomenon.
>
> (WN, 252)

> my doctrine, that the Metaphysical in general, that which alone exists apart from representation, the *thing in itself* of the universe – is nothing but what is known to us within ourselves as *the will*.
>
> (WN, 345)

It is evident that Schopenhauer does not regard the thing-in-itself as a mysterious being, but rather holds that we can become directly aware of it as Will within ourselves. In *WN*, moreover, he does not state that we become aware of the Will though the "thin veil" of time, as he does in other writings. He uses the "thin veil" image in *WN*, but the veil in this instance is not "time." More vaguely, he states that the thing-in-itself "is no longer veiled by any other form than that of the most immediate apprehension" (WN, 291), suggesting that the veil is thin, and that we apprehend the thing-in-itself almost transparently to discern that it is Will.

5. Schopenhauer's Paradoxical References to the Brain

In his works preceding *WN*, namely, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (1813) and *WWR* (1819), Schopenhauer expounds his philosophy from a modified Kantian epistemological standpoint, describing the *a priori* forms of space, time and the understanding as the operations of the principle of sufficient reason, and emphasizing along with Kant, how our mind constructs the world of representation via those *a priori* forms. Within this Schopenhauerian perspective, the world of representation – the physical world – is *maya*, or illusion, and is essentially of our own consciousness's making (e.g., as in WWR I, § 7). The expository standpoint is idealistic, and this idealistic standpoint predominates within Schopenhauer's writings as a whole.

WN adopts an opposing perspective, however, assuming more realistically that physical nature is fundamental (WN, 296). This allows *WN* to explore natural facts for the sake of arriving at the metaphysics that Schopenhauer initially formulates from the idealistic standpoint. The metaphor is that of two people who dig from the different ends of an anticipated tunnel, and who arrive together at the midpoint to complete its

length. One person is the philosopher; the other, the scientist. Schopenhauer intentionally writes *WN* from the scientific outlook, aiming to reveal the idealistic perspective through an examination of scientific data.

Now Schopenhauer's adoption of a realistic standpoint in *WN* clashes noticeably with his usual idealistic stance. For example, it is confusing to read that the intellect – the locale of the principle of sufficient reason – is situated in the brain, after having already been persuaded that from the idealistic standpoint, the brain *itself* is a function of the principle of sufficient reason. The sheer number of references to the brain in *WN* and in his post-1836 writings, such as the 1844 supplementary volume to *WWR* along with *PP* (1851) consequently calls out for some explanation. Some examples are as follows:

From *WN*:

> all consciousness [and hence, all intellect] resides in the brain
>
> (WN, 242)

> that is to say, the whole corporeal world, stretched out in time, which *as such* can never exist anywhere but in the brain any more than dreams, which as long as they last, exist in the same way.
>
> (WN, 295)

> It is not an intellect which has brought forth Nature; it is, on the contrary, Nature which has brought forth the intellect.
>
> (WN, 258)

From other post-1836 writings:

> For this perceptible and real world is obviously a phenomenon of the brain; and so in the assumption that the world as such might exist independently of all brains there lies a contradiction.
>
> (WWR II, 5)

> For time, space and causality, on which all those real and objective events rest, are themselves nothing more than functions of the brain
>
> (WWR II, 8)

> But in this way, the intellect is then led to a deeper insight which is denoted by the word *idealism*, namely that this objective world and its order, as apprehended by the intellect with its operations, does not exist unconditionally and therefore in itself, but arises by means of the brain's functions and so exists primarily in the brain alone.
>
> (PP II, 36)

In light of these remarks, Schopenhauer's position seems vulnerable to a devastating criticism: it is absurd to assert that space, time and causality are in the brain, if the brain is itself an artifact of space, time and causality. One cannot assert that space, time and causality are prior to the brain as the *a priori* conditions for the spatio-temporal world as a whole, and then maintain that they are posterior to the brain in so far as they emerged contingently from an evolutionary process that exists prior to the

emergence of any animals or brains. Perhaps with Schopenhauer in mind, Nietzsche poked fun at such a view in *Beyond Good and Evil* (*BGE*):

> What? And others even say that the external world is the work of our organs? But then our body, as a part of this external world, would be the work of our organs! But then our organs themselves would be the work of our organs! It seems to me that this is a complete *reductio ad absurdum* – assuming that the concept of a *causa sui* is something fundamentally absurd. Consequently, the external world is not the work of our organs – ?
>
> (Nietzsche 1966, 22–23)

Jean-Paul Sartre is only slightly more sympathetic, likening the above situation to the Liar Paradox (Sartre 1956, 415–16). In his construal, we observe other people's sense organs and then infer that our construal of those other people is itself a product of our own sense organs. Here, we first suppose the reality of other people, and use this supposition to formulate a theory that undermines the reality of other people. So if our perception of other people is veridical, then our perception of other people is not veridical. Schopenhauer starts with the idealistic assumption, and the paradox is the same: if we assume that our intellects create the physical world via the principle of sufficient reason, then we are led to assume that our intellects do not create the physical world, but rather that the physical world creates our intellects via the evolutionary process. One way to disentangle Schopenhauer's position would be to explore the various solutions to the Liar Paradox (and related paradoxes, such as Russell's Paradox) and draw conclusions that would apply by extension to Schopenhauer, some of which entail that we jettison his view, given that some reject the paradox as simply representing what is false.

It is to Schopenhauer's credit that he does not leave the philosophical situation in this condition of apparent confusion. Although he does not mention this solution often, in *WN* he offers a way to resolve the above difficulty that involves a relationship of what we can call "reciprocal containment," following how W.V.O. Quine described the relationship between epistemology and natural science (Quine 1969, 83). Within the Schopenhauerian context, this involves tempering the Kantian idealistic standpoint to strengthen the realistic outlook's legitimacy, by stating that *neither* idealism *nor* realism is an absolute philosophical perspective and that each is conditioned by the other. Schopenhauer writes:

> Our objective standpoint is realistic and therefore conditioned, so far as, in taking for granted existence of beings in Nature, it abstracts from the fact that their objective existence postulates an intellect, which contains them as its representation; but Kant's subjective and idealistic standpoint is likewise conditioned, inasmuch as he starts from the intelligence, which itself, however, presupposes Nature, in consequence of whose development as far as animal life that intelligence is for the first time enabled to make its appearance.
>
> (WN, 297)

The above position condenses into the statement, "my mind is in my brain, and my brain is in my mind," but it is not necessary to regard this as a flat contradiction. A way to understand Schopenhauer's version of reciprocal containment is to notice the structural similarity between the phrase "my mind is in my brain, and my brain is in my

mind" and paradoxical figures such as a Klein bottle, where the outside of the figure gradually transforms into the inside, and vice-versa.

An even better model that displays a sharper reversal of "inside" and "outside," while also preserving a transition between the two, is characteristic of the type of image represented by M.C. Escher's *Drawing Hands* (1948), where one hand draws another hand, which in turn draws the hand that drew it. Each hand is sequentially "outside" of the other, while each hand depends upon and issues from the other. Such comparisons suggest that we have here, in Schopenhauer, a "strange loop" phenomenon that has been described well, and at great length, by Douglas R. Hofstadter, who writes: "the 'Strange Loop' phenomenon occurs whenever, by moving upwards (or downwards) through the levels of some hierarchical system, we unexpectedly find ourselves right back where we started" (Hofstadter 1979, 10; see also Hofstadter 2007).

If we accept the comparison between Schopenhauer's remarks on the reciprocal containment of realism and idealism, and "strange loop" images such as Escher's *Drawing Hands*, we can make more sense out of Schopenhauer's remarks concerning the relationship between intellect and brain. When referring to how brains are the result of the principle of sufficient reason's constructive activity, he speaks from the idealistic view and explains the spatio-temporal world as an illusion created by our mental activity. Then, immersing himself within the contents of that mental construction, he then identifies his own body, and then, his brain as a part of that body. Upon noting how his experiential perspective issues from his body within that construction, he then locates his perception within his brain. Once again reflecting that his brain is a product of the principle of sufficient reason, and with this, shifting from an external to an internal standpoint upon his body, he finds himself once again at the beginning of the strange loop.

An upshot of this unusual looping structure is that Schopenhauer can refer either to the brain as a function of the intellect, or to the intellect as a function of the brain, depending upon his assumed philosophical location in the loop. Appreciating this more complicated structure of Schopenhauer's philosophy – what Hofstadter would refer to as a "tangled hierarchy" – helps resolve what seemed earlier to be a devastating criticism. Standing outside of the strange loop, as did Escher when he drew *Drawing Hands*, would be Schopenhauer himself, i.e., the philosopher in general, reflecting upon human experience in an effort to understand it.

This reference to strange loops and reciprocal containment may explain why Schopenhauer believed that his chapter on "Physical Astronomy" was among the most important in his philosophical writings. Although the chapter does not contain the key arguments that we find in *WWR*, it does describe the movement through the hierarchy of nature, from inorganic, to organic, to human levels, and then, at the human level, describe how this hierarchy itself depends upon the human being's own intellectual construction.

6. Some Nietzsche-Related *Parerga* in *On the Will in Nature*

Those familiar with Friedrich Nietzsche's writings will discern some of his well-known themes scattered among the suggestive phrases in *WN*. Sharing Schopenhauer's fate,

Nietzsche's writings were mostly neglected during his life, and both men felt as if they had been born at the wrong time. Schopenhauer stated that his doctrine "lays no claim whatever to the name 'Philosophy of the present time' . . . but it certainly does claim the title of 'Philosophy of the time to come'" (WN, 221). Echoing Schopenhauer, Nietzsche subtitled *BGE* with the words, "Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future," also confident that he would be honored by future generations. Prior to this, and not too long after the publication of *WN*, Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872) published his own *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (1843), confirming that not only Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were casting their eyes beyond their present time.

Nietzsche's later views of German culture (e.g., *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), "What the Germans Lack") are often cited as evidence of his disengagement from German nationalism and what became Nazism in the twentieth century. His early writings nonetheless retain a strong nationalistic flavor. The *Birth of Tragedy* (1872) offers a clear example, where Nietzsche states that Kant and Schopenhauer philosophically released German culture from the Socratic domination of reason, theory and science, and that the music of Bach, Beethoven and Wagner announce the beginnings of a new tragic, Germanic culture. Schopenhauer perceived Kant's role in German culture along the same lines, stating that the Kantian philosophy served to render German culture fundamentally different from the rest of Europe (WN, 337). As did Nietzsche, he maintained that Kant's philosophy opened up the possibility of a release from rationality (i.e., from the principle of sufficient reason) to appreciate non-rational modes of apprehending truth.

A salient feature of Schopenhauer's theory of music is his metaphorical correspondence between inorganic, plant, animal and human levels and the bass, baritone, tenor and soprano levels in music. In *WN*, he invokes the same hierarchy to draw associations between types of Hellenic peoples, relating the indolent and obtuse Boeotians to the vegetative level, the strong and brave Spartans to the animal level, and the creative Athenians to the human level at its best. Within the very same paragraph, he refers to the less elevated group of "commonplace humanity," reminiscent of Nietzsche's "Last Man" (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Prologue") and to Diogenes, the model for Nietzsche's "Madman" (BGE, § 125) who carries a lantern during the day, looking for someone who understands the meaning of the death of God.

WN also anticipates Nietzsche's doctrine of the will-to-power in so far as *WN* states that "will is not, as hitherto been assumed, an accident of cognition and therefore of life; but life itself is a manifestation of will" (WN, 309). Although there is a philosophical gulf between Schopenhauer's negative notion of will as an absolute lack, and Nietzsche's positive conception of will-to-power as an expanding, over-fullness of energy, Schopenhauer expresses the key idea that we should understand life in reference to some type of will and power. The following excerpt – one that essentially reiterates the quote from his notebooks cited at the beginning of this chapter – matches how, using Schopenhauerian phraseology, Nietzsche describes the will-to-power surging through everything as the world's "intelligible character" (BGE, § 36). The excerpt from *WN* is as follows: "let us look attentively at a torrent dashing headlong over rocks and ask ourselves whether so determined an impetus, so boisterous a vehemence, can arise without an exertion of strength, and whether an exertion of strength is conceivable without will" (WN, 308).

Schopenhauer memorably concludes *WN* with the embodiment of "truth" as a woman who comes down "stark naked from lofty Olympus," adding the warning that anyone who intends to "make love to this nude beauty" will need to "forego the good fortune of becoming a Government and University professor" (Schopenhauer 1891, 379). All those who have read the preface to Nietzsche's *BGE*, where Nietzsche asks us to "suppose truth were a woman," and then proceeds to criticize the traditional philosophers for being too aggressively scientific and hence, for always having failed to win over the truth, will see the unmistakable parallelism in how these two philosophers establish a partnership between truth, femininity and unconventionality.

See also 1 Schopenhauer on Scientific Knowledge; 2 Perception and Understanding: Schopenhauer, Reid and Kant; 5 Schopenhauer and Transcendental Idealism; 17 Schopenhauer on the Value of Compassion; 18 Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy; 21 Schopenhauer and Freud; 24 Schopenhauer's Influence on Wittgenstein.

Notes

1 References to Schopenhauer's *On the Will in Nature* (WN) are to Schopenhauer (1891).
2 References to *Parerga and Paralipomena* (PP I and II) are to Schopenhauer (1974).
3 References to the manuscript remains are to Schopenhauer (1989).

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Part III

Art, Beauty and the Sublime

11

Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Music

ROBERT W. HALL

Some may contend that Schopenhauer's definition of philosophy precluded his having a philosophy of music. According to the German philosopher, philosophy's task was to reproduce knowledge of perception which was concrete in the abstract; "to present to rational knowledge the whole manifold of the world in general, according to its nature, condensed and summarized into a few abstract concepts" (WWR I, 82). But Schopenhauer noted that the fine arts, like philosophy "work at bottom towards the solution of the problem of existence" (WWR II, 406). But unlike the arts, philosophy sought to understand the problem of existence through the "language of reflection," relying on the attainment of "permanent universal knowledge," that condensed "the whole manifold of the world into a few abstract concepts" (WWR I, 82). Apart from music, the fine arts answered the question "What is life?" through the "naïve and child-like perception" which was a fleeting image and was not the permanent universal knowledge which philosophy sought. In contrast to the fragmentary character of the answer the fine arts gave to the question, "What is life?," "Music also answers it, more profoundly . . . than do all the other arts, since in a language intelligible with absolute directness, yet not capable of translation into that of our faculty of reason, it expresses the innermost nature of all life and existence" (WWR II, 406). In a sense, then, the fine arts and philosophy were answers to the same question. Because of this they were "radically the same." In their capacity to deal with the question "What is life?" the fine arts and philosophy differed. Schopenhauer asserted that music could have had a philosophy if there had been success in realizing a detailed, accurate and complete explanation of music which resulted in the repetition in concepts of what music expressed. Such a success, however, was not achievable.

Schopenhauer parodied Leibniz's statement that music was "an unconscious exercise in arithmetic in which the mind does not know it is counting" (WWR I, 256n.). Unlike Leibniz's "lower point of view" about music, music considered empirically and externally as merely a "means of grasping immediately and in the concrete, larger

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numbers and more complex numerical ratios" (WWR 1, 265), Schopenhauer took a higher view of music. He affirmed that "music is an unconscious exercise in metaphysics in which the mind does not know it is philosophizing" (WWR I, 264n.). Schopenhauer clearly implied that music had a philosophic character because it was a universal language and was concerned for the being of the world; "music if regarded as an expression of the world, is in the highest degree a universal language" (WWR I, 262). Further, music was an expression of the "inner nature of the world" and offers "a true and complete picture of the nature of the world" (WWR I, 260, 261; WWR II, 450). These expressions of the universality of music in presenting the essence of the world came from an immediate, intuitive understanding without any abstract, rational conception. Music was a copy of the will itself so that the world could be termed embodied music as well as embodied will, although Schopenhauer believed that music could exist apart from the world.

Before dealing with the analogy between the universal language of music and that of concepts which brings out their fundamental difference and presents Schopenhauer's conception of the essence of music, his treatment of the analogies between the Ideas and music should be considered. Ideas, the direct objectification of the will were copied by the fine arts, while music copied the will.

Because both music and the Ideas in different ways exemplified the will, Schopenhauer introduced analogies between them to explain his account of music. Unlike the Ideas, music never expressed the phenomenon, but only its own inner nature as will. Music had but an indirect relation to phenomena. The analogies revealed not music's essence, but only some of its external features, tones, imitative aspects of melody and rhythm which were related to phenomena, and especially to the actions and emotions of individuals. Schopenhauer warned that his explanation of music and its manifestation of the Ideas in the phenomenal world was not to be taken as a demonstration of the nature of music and its meaning. It was impossible to demonstrate that music was a copy of what could not be represented. But Schopenhauer believed that one could acquire a genuine conviction about the meaning of music by constantly reflecting on his explanation while listening to music and being very familiar with the whole thought he was expounding.

The first analogy between music and the Ideas turned on the correspondence between the classification of the Ideas and the scales and tones of music. The ground bass corresponded to the Idea of organic matter, "the crudest mass" from which everything in the organic world developed. Schopenhauer extended this analogy according to the laws of harmony which stipulated that the bass note could only be accompanied by high notes which sounded simultaneously and automatically. This was parallel to affirming that the natural world, its bodies and organizations, gradually developed into an existence out of the planet's mass. Those voices or notes close to the bass corresponded to the Ideas of inorganic matter, those higher up on the scale, the tenor and alto, the plant and animal kingdom. Completing the analogy between the classification of the Ideas and the scales and tones of music, Schopenhauer likened the significant connections of one thought which expressed the whole which melody brought with its high, single, principal voice, the soprano, "leading the whole," to the highest grade of the objectification of the will in the Idea of man. Melody expressed the "intellectual life and endeavor of man." Only man with his reasoning capability could chart a life that

looked at the past and considered the countless possibilities before him and achieved a course of life which was therefore intellectual and connected as a whole.

In a second analogy, Schopenhauer revealed how melody showed the stresses, joys, and disappointments that fell to man as the highest objectification of the Ideas. "Melody . . . portrays every agitation, every effort, every movement of the will which the faculty of reason summarizes under . . . feeling and which cannot be further taken up into the abstraction of reason" (WWR I, 259). In addition to the different kinds of effort exerted by the will, melody also expressed the will "by ultimately finding again a harmonious interval and still more the keynote" (WWR I, 260). Different tempo changes in melody indicated different forms of the will's effort and the pains and pleasures that resulted. Rapid melodies without significant changes were cheerful. They paralleled the quick transition from wish to satisfaction, and then to a new wish which constituted "happiness and well being." Satisfaction won only after long delay was likened to sad, slow melodies which "strike painful discords" and returned to the home key or keynote only through many bars. Ordinary happiness easily obtained was reflected in the "short, intelligible phrases of rapid dance music." Through "great phrases, long passages, and wide deviations," the *allegro maestoso* reached a far-off goal through a "greater, nobler effort." Paralleling human boredom or languor was the "sustained keynote." This "intolerable" effect was approximated by "very monotonous and meaningless melodies" which were hardly musical.

Except for the last example of languor, these analogies between melody and different aspects of human life offered a different view of the world of phenomena. Instead of misery, conflict, and dissatisfaction, the melodies described by Schopenhauer "speak of one satisfaction leading to another," even of a final satisfaction when sooner or later a melody wound up at the home key. Corresponding to the *adagio*, human suffering was not mean or ignominious but was a "great and noble endeavor." Because dissonances were "disquieting" and almost painful, they must be resolved into consonance. The competitive and turbulent activity of the will as it appeared in the individuality of phenomenal existence was not mirrored in these analogies. In them, music expressed a relatively optimistic view of the world of appearance in contrast to the pessimism of phenomenal existence discussed elsewhere in *The World as Will and Representation*.

Despite the somewhat subdued optimism of these analogies which some see as conflicting with Schopenhauer's characterization of the individual's lot in the world of appearance as wretched and hopeless, by analogy Schopenhauer did relate the will's inner contradiction manifested in the "permanent battlefield" of phenomena to music. He contended that a "pure, harmonious system of tones" could not be achieved because the numbers which expressed the tones have "insurmountable irrationalities." "Perfect purity" in music was not possible since discord could be hidden. In this analogy, at least, there appeared to be a correspondence between the irrationality of the world of appearance and the apparent irrationality of music.

As already noted, Schopenhauer emphasized that no direct relationship existed between music and these analogies. The analogies were concerned with phenomena, the particulars of human feelings, strivings and struggles. These particulars of the analogies were expressed in assertions which have a cognitive content. A particular feeling or emotion present in consciousness was related to an object or motive. But Schopenhauer held that music was not concerned with such ordinary emotions. They

were phenomena, but Schopenhauer asserted that music contained the inner nature of these phenomena, the feelings or emotions themselves as aspects of the will, "Music never expresses the phenomena, but only the inner nature, the in-itself of every phenomenon, the will itself" (WWR I, 261). This inner nature is accessible not through rational knowledge *(Wissen)* but through *Erkenntnis*, a kind of knowledge suffused with emotion or feeling *(Gefühl*). The knowledge *(Erkenntnis)* that "everyone possesses directly in the concrete" Schopenhauer called "feeling" *(Gefühl*) (cf. Atwell 1993: 100).

> the true opposite of *rational knowledge (Wissen)* is feeling (*Gefühl*) . . . The concept denoted by the word *feeling* has only a *negative* concept, namely that something present in consciousness *is not a concept, not abstract knowledge of reason.* However, be it what it may, it comes under the concept of *feeling*. Thus the immeasurable wide sphere of this concept includes the most heterogeneous things, and we do not see how they come together so long as we have not recognized that they all agree in this negative aspect of *not being abstract concepts*.
>
> (WWR I, 51)

A closer look at Schopenhauer's parody of Leibniz's statement above suggested that perhaps music was not an "unconscious exercise in philosophy" nor that "the mind does not know *(scire*) that it is philosophizing" (WWR I, 256n.). *Scire* was always associated with abstract terms, which as we have seen, did not apply to Schopenhauer's view of music. While there may not be a *Wissen* of music leading to abstract concepts that summarized the world, there was another kind of knowledge, *Erkenntnis*, which not only allowed an inquiry into the nature of music, but also suggested that there may be a philosophy of music *sui generis.* Such a philosophy would attempt to provide an analysis of music which revealed it as a universal language of feeling that presented the quintessence of life and its events, analogous to the universal language of concepts summarizing the world that philosophy sought.

What underlay the distinction between *Wissen* and *Erkenntnis* was Schopenhauer's apparent adoption of the faculty psychology tradition which flourished in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Klein 1970, 469–75). According to this tradition, the mind was divided into several, separate faculties, independent of one another. On one occasion, Schopenhauer distinguished three separate faculties, emotion, intellect and will; the "real character of mind" he described as "emotion, passion, alterations of knowing and willing" (WWR I, 225–26). Through an organic analogy, Schopenhauer characterized the distinction between the will and emotions, on the one hand, and the intellect on the other, as a fundamental distinction between the heart and the head.

> All that which is the business of the *will* in the widest sense, such as desire, passion, joy, pain, kindness, goodness, wickedness, and also that which is usually understood by the term *"Gemut"* (disposition, feeling) . . . is attributed to the heart . . . the head denotes everything that is the business of *knowledge* . . . Heart and head indicate the whole person. But the head is always the secondary, the derived; for it is not the centre of the body, but its highest efflorescence.
>
> (WWR II, 237)

Ordinary emotions or feelings of the heart were included in "all possible efforts, strivings and manifestations of the will" that occurred within the individual and were assigned by reason to the "wide, negative concept of feeling." Such efforts could be expressed by "the infinite number of melodies" in a composition. But some of these efforts were expressed not in their material or phenomenal character as actual emotions, but as emotions themselves. The apprehension of the will in music occurred in "grasping" the universality of the form of the emotion without the matter:

> Music does not express this or that particular and definite pleasure, this or that affliction, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, or peace of mind, but joy, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, peace of mind *themselves*, to a certain extent in the abstract, their essential nature, without any accessories, and so also without the motives for them. Nevertheless, we understand them in this extracted quintessence.
>
> (WWR I, 261)

"Without any accessories" indicated that these emotions themselves were related neither to an object nor a motive. "Sadness itself," then, was not directed to any object, "jealousy itself" had no relation to a motive. Ordinary emotions were "stirrings of the will." They aroused the will; sorrow for the loss of a loved one, jealousy at an acquaintance's success. Such "stirrings of the will" precluded any enjoyment of music. But the emotions themselves in music were heard by the will-less subject of knowledge in their "extracted quintessence."

Crucial to the understanding of Schopenhauer's theory of musical meaning was his oft-repeated statement that music was a universal language (WWR I, 263). Music was a universal language of emotions or feelings themselves shorn as it were, of their particularity as they appeared in the melodies of a musical composition. The universality of language resembled superficially the universality of concepts. Both universalities were abstractions from reality, the world of appearance. The reality of particular things and feelings furnish "what is perceptive, special, and individual," the particular case, both to the universality of concepts and that of music.

However, while affirming the similarity of the universality of concepts and the universal language of feeling in being "an abstraction from reality," in a sense, Schopenhauer asserted, the two universalities were opposed. The difference in the way the two universalities were abstracted from their respective particulars was fundamental for understanding the difference between the feelings themselves expressed in the language of music, and the particular feelings expressed in ordinary language. The universality of concepts consisted in *abstracta*. Concepts contained only the form, "the stripped-off outer shell of things," abstracted by reason from the perception of particular things. Concepts, thus, were "*universalia post rem*." In contrast, the universality of music contained "the inmost kernel preceding all form," the will. Music, then, expressed "*universalia ante rem*."

As with the *a priori* forms of experience, geometrical figures and numbers, emotions themselves were not empty abstractions like concepts but were "perceptible and thoroughly definite." Emotions themselves occurred when they were divested of any cognitive relations of their "accessories and . . . motives" which made them phenomenal. To a certain extent "emotions themselves were 'in the abstract'."

In a telling passage Schopenhauer presented a clear explanation of his conception of musical meaning. He explained why it is easy to understand the will as the object of music and, although ineffable, why this insight is knowable. Underlying this passage was not rational knowledge (*Wissen*) but knowledge as feeling (*Gefühl*), a way of knowing that was the opposite of rational knowledge which disclosed to the individual his essence as will.

> The inexpressible depth of all music, by virtue of which it floats past us as a paradise quite familiar and yet eternally remote, and is so easy to understand and yet so inexplicable, is due to the fact that it reproduces all the emotions of our innermost being, but entirely without reality and remote from its pain . . . the seriousness essential to it . . . is to be explained from the fact that its object is not the representation . . . but that this object is directly the will, and this is essentially the most serious of all things, as being that on which all depends.
>
> (WWR I, 264)

In a series of contrasts between the phenomenal world and the world revealed by music, Schopenhauer articulated the nature of musical contemplation and its object, the will. The "paradise" of music was quite familiar to us because its universal language was made up of formal counterparts, the emotions themselves, of the particular, phenomenal emotions we experienced as individuals; yet the language which as will-less subjects we had of knowledge was "eternally remote" from the phenomenal experience of the will as affected or stirred by its movements, affections, or feelings. Music's "inexpressible depth" was easy for us to understand through feeling (*Gefühl*), the knowledge individuals had of the will, but it was inexplicable in terms of the principle of sufficient reason which gave us knowledge of the world of sensible representation. The depth of music arose from its reproduction of the stirrings, movements, or emotions of the will in the world of appearance, but without the pain and reality of intentional emotions and their motives. Lastly, the object of music was not the world of representation as discussed in the analogies between music and representation which could be deceptive. It was "the most serious of all things," the will itself, not its shadow as disclosed by the fine arts, but the will as the kernel of the world of representation as disclosed by the composer.

Schopenhauer's account of the relation between the metaphysical and physical aspects of music suggested how music, in a sense, was a representation of what could not be represented. Schopenhauer's understanding of the laws of acoustics was based on Pythagorean laws (Ferrara 1997, 186–187). So long as the vibrations of two tones had a rational relation to each other expressed in small numbers, the two tones could be taken together as we apprehended them through the recurring coincidence of their vibrations. The two tones blended and were in harmony or consonance. But if the relation between the two tones was irrational as expressed in large numbers, there was no recurring coincidence among the vibrations. As a result the two tones resisted our apprehension of their being together and were called a dissonance.

The connection between the metaphysical significance of music and its physical basis lay in the fact that the resisting of our apprehension of dissonance became the image of the will's dissatisfaction, but when our apprehension easily accepted the con-

sonance, the result was an image of the will's satisfaction. This revealed how there indeed could be a representation of that which could not be represented, i.e., the will:

> as that rational and irrational element in the numerical relations of the vibrations admits of innumerable degrees, nuances, sequences, and variations, music by means of it becomes the material in which all movements whose essential nature is always satisfaction and dissatisfaction, although in innumerable degrees, can be faithfully portrayed and reproduced in all their finest shades and modifications, and this takes place by means of the invention of melody.
>
> (WWR II, 451)

The rational and irrational aspect of the numerical relations of vibrations allowed countless "degrees, nuances, sequences, and variations" to appear analogously in music. Music became the material underlying the movements of the will which were fundamentally satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Like the vibrations of tones, these appeared in countless degrees and could be "faithfully reproduced in all their finest shades and modifications" of the different emotions themselves. Here, Schopenhauer indicated how what could not be represented in a sense, could be. For, as Schopenhauer put it, "the movements of the will (were) tinted with the province of mere representation" which was the "exclusive scene" of the other arts (WWR II, 451).

Initially it appeared that satisfaction and dissatisfaction accounted for the representation of the will. But to say that they appeared in countless degrees etc. was not very helpful in explaining how the will was represented. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction were abstract nouns. They achieved content when we realized that the "material" underlying the movements of the will, i.e., satisfaction and dissatisfaction, was made up of emotions, feelings themselves. Satisfaction occurred when the music contained joy, gaiety, merriment; dissatisfaction happened when jealousy, anger, hatred appeared in the music. Movements of the will which were satisfaction and dissatisfaction appeared in varying degrees through different shadings and modifications of the emotions themselves. As Radford contends, "sadness . . . varies with the nature of the music, with its particular quality that we subsume under the generic term, 'sadness'. The sadness of Bach is not the sadness of Beethoven. Schubert's is not Chopin's" (Radford 1989, 73).

The notion of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the will has provided a glimpse of the will; the will was "tinted," as noted above, with mere representation common to the other arts, but not in the same way, to music. In the world of "knowing beings," the world of art, and especially of music, the affections of the will itself, its pleasures and pains were not aroused, but only their substitutes, the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the will expressed in the having of emotions or feelings themselves. These substitutes conformed with the intellect as either a "picture or image" of the will's satisfaction or, opposing the intellect, as a "picture or image" of the will's dissatisfaction, i.e., either as a "picture of greater or lesser pleasure or a "picture or image" of greater or lesser pain. "Pleasure" and pain here were short-hand terms for those emotions themselves which are modifications of them. The will, then, could be apprehended by the "knowing being" as "tinted" with representation as a picture or image of the will's satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Consequently, music did not cause suffering and even the most "painful" chords (presumably the highly dissonant chords) remained "pleasant" for the will-less

subject of knowledge. In a way, then, what could not be represented, the will, paradoxically, could.

To the careless reader, Schopenhauer's references to an "image" or "picture" of the will's satisfaction or dissatisfaction may have suggested that he was writing about program or imitative music. But this was hardly the case. While he discussed the image or picture of the will's satisfaction or dissatisfaction, the human passions and emotions which "speak from a symphony" were only in the abstract and without any particularization; it was only their form without the material. But sometimes, Schopenhauer contended, influenced by the music, the imagination attempted to shape the "spirit world" which directly affected us and "to clothe it with flesh and bone." While Schopenhauer declared that this was the source of the song with words and opera, it was also the source of the listener's attempt to fashion a program or picture which reflected the music. Although Schopenhauer did not seem overly concerned with the listener's creation of castles in the air, he was with the composer who composed program or imitative music.

Schopenhauer rejected imitative program or "painted" music because it violated the nature of the genuine musical composition. The composition was related to its "perceptive expression" because both were "different expressions" of the same inner nature of the will. The composer of imitative or descriptive music was unable to grasp the inner nature of the will by his faculty of reason. But the relation between the composition and its expressiveness required an "immediate knowledge" of the "unknowable." Lacking such knowledge, the composer consciously intended to imitate with the use of concepts. The result is that the music imitated the phenomena denoted by the concept rather than expressing its true nature as the inner nature of the will. Such music, Schopenhauer affirmed, was "ungenuine." He complained that the concept is so definite that it left nothing behind to reflect on and to inspire. Imitative music lacked genuine melody that "speaks not of things," but simply of "weal and woe" as being for the will the sole realities. Emphasizing that music was not directed to our reason, but to our feeling, Schopenhauer declared that music "says so much to the heart, whereas to the head it has nothing to say" (PP II, 430). So it was an improper use of the head in turning out music which was imitative or "painted" objects. Such music should be rejected "once for all," emphasized Schopenhauer. As he observed, it was one thing to express passion, quite another to "paint" objects.

Schopenhauer, therefore, faulted Haydn for *The Seasons* and *The Creation* which imitated various aspects of the Biblical account of creation, including the sounds of animals. Beethoven would also be chastised for his *Wellington Battle Symphony* because of its imitation of the sounds of a battle, and his sixth or *Pastoral Symphony* for its imitation of natural phenomena, country scenes, and the sounds of birds and animals. Schopenhauer exempted Mozart and Rossini from playing to the "head"; in contrast to the music of Haydn and Beethoven, their music was "heartfelt." That Beethoven was not always "misguided" for Schopenhauer was apparent when he noted that a symphony of Beethoven spoke of "all the human passions and emotions" (WWR II, 450).

It was not through concepts that underlay program or imitative music that a listener gained satisfaction or dissatisfaction, but through the emotions themselves that the music contained. In its universal language, the expressiveness of the music reflected the composer's knowledge of the "stirrings of the will" that were the essence or "kernel"

of the composition, whether it was song, opera, or symphony. The relation between the musical composition and its expressiveness, the stirrings of the will, stemmed from the world as embodied music as "music expresses the metaphysical to everything that is physical in the world, the thing in itself, to every phenomenon" (WWR I, 262). Schopenhauer's account of a Beethoven symphony described the world as embodied music:

> A symphony of Beethoven presents us with the greatest confusion which has the most perfect order as its foundation; with the most vehement conflict which is transformed the next moment into the most beautiful harmony. It is a *rerum concordia discors*, a true and complete picture of the nature of the world, which rolls on in the boundless confusion of innumerable forms and maintains itself by constant destruction.
>
> (WWR II, 450)

Although Schopenhauer favored the absolute music of the symphony, the concerto, and the sonata over the song or opera, he did not rule out music accompanied with words. He regarded the human voice which appeared in the mass as an instrument. It was an "accidental circumstance" that the voice, on the whole, abandoned its purely instrumental quality and assumed a pragmatic function through the addition of words to the music as in song or opera. As long as the poetry or text was subordinate to the music, the music could have an appropriate relationship to the words. In this subordinate relationship, the words incorporated in the musical composition had a secondary value compared with the musical tones which were "more powerful, more infallible, and rapid." Words, Schopenhauer warned, "should never forsake that subordinate position to make themselves the chief thing, and music a mere means of expressing the song" (WWR I, 261). Music, concluded Schopenhauer, should not stick too closely to the words and mold itself according to events and words, speaking "a language not its own." Particular phenomena, perceptive, special, and real such as a poem, pantomime or opera set to music stood out as etched in an enhanced significance. The relation between music and its particular instance of reality rested on the fact that both were significantly different expressions of the same inner nature of the will. Because it was closely connected to the "true nature of all things," music which was appropriate to a scene, action, or text revealed the secret meaning of these realities and served as their "most accurate and distinct commentary."

In his later writing Schopenhauer was somewhat unclear in explaining his view of the relationship of music to the text or *vice versa* (WWR II, 448–49). Initially, he spoke of the addition of *music* to the text. Then, he discussed the addition of *poetry* to the music. Fortunately, the distinction appeared to be irrelevant. Whether music was added to poetry or poetry to music was not important so long as music "at once shows its power and superior capacity" (WWR II, 448).

Whether music was added to poetry or poetry to music did, however, have relevance to Schopenhauer's presentation of the effects of each. For Schopenhauer the music of an opera was independent of the characters and action in the stage. But when added to them "music presented the innermost soul," "the real and true nature" of the character and events on stage which was "mere cloak and body" of the feelings expressed by the words. Schopenhauer emphasized the importance of the distinction between what occurred in the music and what took place on the stage of the opera,

with its characters, scenery and happenings. Music, Schopenhauer wrote, was not interested in the "material" of the opera, i.e., all that occurred on stage, but only in expressing "the storm of the passions and the pathos of the feelings everywhere in the same way. Whether the material of the opera was about Agamemnon, Achilles or an ordinary family, the passions and feelings occurred in the same way" (WWR II, 449). Music, then, became the inner significance of all that takes place on stage, the characters, the actions, the words, and their "ultimate and secret necessity that rests on the inner significance" (WWR II, 449). With poetry added to music the composer's imagination caught fire when words and action allowed him to grasp the underlying affections of the will. The words and action aroused in him the appropriate feelings to be expressed. In this way, the composer's musical imagination was excited. The addition of poetry to music Schopenhauer found to be a source of "profound joy" because it stimulated the direct and indirect sources of knowledge at the same time, and simultaneously, the direct awareness of knowledge of the stirring of the will and the indirect knowledge afforded by the "intelligible words," concepts denoted by words. From its own resources (Schopenhauer contended) music "was certainly able to express every movement of the will, every feeling, but through the addition of words, we receive also their objects, the motives that give rise to that feeling" (WWR II, 449). Schopenhauer here showed the will's transition from the emotion itself to a particularized or phenomenal emotion with motives as accessories.

In his last writings, Schopenhauer reconsidered the effects of words added to music. He regarded the addition of words to music as subordination of music to words. Schopenhauer sounded a new note that, apart from the absolute music of the symphony, concerto, and sonata, the composition of music was hampered by pragmatic or utilitarian considerations. Such pragmatic considerations, however, did not necessarily keep music from realizing its aesthetic purpose.

> Music . . . stands to the text, or to other realities imposed on it, in . . . subjection, although this not so unavoidable. It must first of all adapt every note to the length and meaning of the words of the text, but must also assume throughout a certain homogeneity with the text and likewise bear the character of the other arbitrary claims imposed on it and accordingly be church, opera, military, dance, or other music. But all this is just as foreign to the nature of music as are human utilitarian purposes to purely aesthetic architecture.
>
> (PP II, 431)

These remarks clashed with his assertion mentioned earlier that the music to which poetry was added "excited" the musical imagination of the composer, that "profound joy" resulted from this addition of poetry to music, and that music showed its power and greater capacity by bringing out the feelings expressed in the text. Schopenhauer compared this subordination of music to the text with the subordination of the aesthetic purpose of architecture as a fine art to utilitarian or pragmatic goals. At the same time, he admitted that while realizing the utilitarian purpose, architecture could still achieve its aesthetic purpose. His analogy between music and architecture as fine arts implied that music also could realize its aesthetic purpose as well as its pragmatic goals. Architecture "achieves its aims under the conditions imposed by those utilitarian purposes and accordingly produces a temple, palace . . . in such a way that the building in

itself is beautiful as well as suitable for its purpose and even proclaims this through its aesthetic character" (PP II, 431).

One of the utilitarian aims to which music was subjected, was Grand Opera, the operas of Meyerbeer and Spontini, not the operas of Mozart, Bellini and Rossini. Though Grand, Schopenhauer exempted Rossini's opera from criticism because "his music speaks its own language so distinctly and purely that it requires no words at all." "Grand Opera," he declared, "is devoid of musical worth" (PP II, 433–34). For the music had to "bend and submit" to the vagaries of an "absurd and insipid plot." Further, the listener's attention was diverted from the music by the "childish and barbaric pomp" of the costumes and scenery, as well as the antics of the dancers and the ballet girls with their short skirts. Finally, complained Schopenhauer, the vocal part of the music did not go along with and fit in with the other parts, both vocal and instrumental. The human voice attempted to dominate the music completely, which in some cases was appropriate and in others not. With soprano and alto, the melody flowed naturally. But with the tenor and bass voice, the leading melody usually belonged to the higher instruments so that their singing "stands out like an arrogant and conceited voice." All this prevented the listener from appreciating the "sacred, mysterious, and profound language of tones."

Despite the predominance of "bad poetry" in opera there could be poetry that was "condensed and full of ideas" to which music could be added. To the "purely musical mind" nothing was needed to be added to music since as pure music it stood by itself. Yet, for those lacking such a mind, "the pure language of tones" could be linked with, and conform to words or action through intuitive perception. This allowed "our intuitively perceiving and reflecting intellect" to have "an easy and analogous occupation" (PP II, 432). At the same time we were closely following the music, Schopenhauer seemed to be saying, our intuitive perception provided an image or picture which functioned as a model or diagram, like an instance of an example to a universal, the universal being the universal language of the heart. In functioning as a diagram or model, the image or picture conformed to what the music said in its universal language of the heart which was without any picture or image. Such an image which added significance to the music should not be complex, but simple. Otherwise, it would be contrary to the primary purpose of the music, to reveal the emotions themselves that it contained. Simplicity, Schopenhauer affirmed, joined with the truth, was a law essential to all art. In its simplicity, the image or picture enhanced the impression of the music. Schopenhauer's account here of the role of the image or picture was reminiscent of his view mentioned earlier, that, in a sense, music presented a will that can be "tinted" with representation as a "picture" or "image" of the will's satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Underlying Schopenhauer's criticism of Grand Opera was his profound dislike of contemporary music. He again resorted to the analogy between music and architecture to explain the deterioration in quality of the music of his time. The architecture he cited was not contemporary, but the architecture of the Roman Empire. Just as the architecture of that time took "the wrong path," so, Schopenhauer claimed, did contemporary music. Under the Roman emperors the "simple and essential properties" of architecture as a fine art were perverted with partly concealed decorations and embellishments. Music's "wrong path," Schopenhauer lamented, "gives us much noise, many instruments, much art, but very few, clear, penetrating and touching ideas" (PP II, 431). With the exception of Rossini's musical compositions, his "wonderful melodies . . . and music

that speaks without words," Schopenhauer found meaning and melody absent from contemporary musical compositions, especially opera. For the plight of contemporary music, Schopenhauer blamed the influence of a "miserable Hegelry and its charlatanism for the taste of the times which endured an obscure, nebulous, unintelligible, and even senseless way of writing" (PP II, 431). Some musical embellishments introduced by Berlioz were a greatly enlarged orchestra along with an enhancement of the capabilities of the instruments that helped in the development of chromatic harmony. These developments were the result of Berlioz's conception of music's potentialities for poetic and dramatic expression notably apparent in his *Symphonie fantastique*.

In some ways, Schopenhauer was a Romantic. His profound pessimism and his emphasis on art and music as the highest embodiment of the will attested to his Romanticism. But he rejected the Romantic preoccupation in music, beginning with Berlioz, of the precedence of harmony over melody in musical compositions. Schopenhauer averred that melody was "the core of music" to which "harmony is related as the sauce is to red meat" (WWR I, 276). The chromaticism of the Romantic era led to "ambiguity, a sense of remoteness and tension" (Westrup and Harrison 1960, 556). This explained Schopenhauer's unhappiness with much of the music of his time. Such harmonic ambiguity was consummately developed in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde.* Wagner was much impressed and profoundly influenced by *The World as Will and Representation.* But, apparently, Schopenhauer did not reciprocate in like admiration. Wagner sent Schopenhauer the libretto of his *Ring des Nibelungen,* a presentation which the recipient never acknowledged. Despite Schopenhauer's failure to acknowledge Wagner's gift, his supporters reported that in their talks with him, the philosopher opined that Wagner "should give up music as he clearly showed a greater talent for poetry" (Reinhardt 1992, 288). But, alas, such was not the case. The libretto, now residing at Harvard University's Houghton Library, contains the philosopher's marginal comments to it. Summed up by Guthke (1996, 48), "Schopenhauer's marginal notes indicate neither hide nor hair of literary value, be it stylistic or substantive . . ."

Despite the Romantic aspects of his philosophy, Schopenhauer did not share the Romantic view of music and individualism which described the individual's value as resting on what is "unique and diverse" with the object desired being "revelation, or the cultivation of idiosyncrasy, personal racial, or temporal" (Lovejoy 1960, 82). While admitting that individuality existed in the sense that human beings had diverse traits and were not generically the same, Schopenhauer would not admit that they were fundamentally unique. Apart from those who denied the will and consequently their individuality, life for others "is . . . a dreamlike staggering through the four ages of life to death accompanied by a series of trivial thoughts" (WWR I, 321). Nor does man stand alone as unique and solitary. The Idea of man required that it be accompanied by all the lower grades of ideas through the forms of animals, the plant kingdom and to the inorganic, the basis of it all. Analogously, melody, "the highest of the will's objectification, the intellectual life and endeavor of man," also required the accompaniment of all the other voices down to the lowest. Implicitly, if not explicitly, Schopenhauer rejected the Romantic individualism described above, along with its music, for he believed that nature cares only for the species.

See also 16 Schopenhauer on the Metaphysics of Art and Morality; 23 Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner.

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12

Schopenhauer's Theory of Architecture

W. JULIAN KORAB-KARPOWICZ

In the opening years of the nineteenth century there were a number of competing architectural styles, of which the main ones were the Classical and the Gothic. In Germany an intense discussion concerning architecture was taking place among art theorists and philosophers. Under the influence of Winckelmann, Greek antiquity was held up as an absolute model, while at the same time the Romantic movement was advocating the Gothic, which was increasingly seen as a national German style (Kruft 1994, 290). Those who tried to combine these two positions became pioneers of Eclecticism and Historicism. In this environment of lively intellectual debate, Schopenhauer formulated his bold architectural theory. He presented it in the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation* (first published in 1818) and then in greater detail in the second volume (1844). In opposition to Hegel and other contemporaries who extolled Gothic architecture, Schopenhauer defended Classicism. But at the same time, through his emphasis on the role of the will and his ideas regarding structural functionalism, he anticipated modern architectural theories.

1. The Will and Modernity

As a philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer was the product of various influences. In his youth he had studied Greek and Latin. During his university studies he became deeply interested in Plato and Kant, the two thinkers who proved to be the most influential in the development of his own philosophical system. Through his mother, who was a novelist, he had the chance early in his life to meet prominent literary figures and intellectuals, such as Friedrich Schlegel and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who, after a journey to Italy (1786–1788) distanced himself from his earlier Gothic preferences and became a Classicist (Kruft 1994, 192). There is no doubt that his classical upbringing was a powerful ingredient in Schopenhauer's intellectual background. Nevertheless, in

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contrast to the philosophers who can be associated with the classical tradition that goes back to Plato and Aristotle, he rejected the view that human actions could be subject to the direction of a controlling and dispassionate intellect, capable of molding our character (Gardiner 1977, 26). He regarded human beings as embodiments of will. For him, the will was "the substance of man, the intellect the accident" (WWR II, 201). Like Thomas Hobbes, he affirmed the priority of passions, of will, over reason. This makes him a modern philosopher, trying to overcome the classical tradition rather than building on it. Like many great philosophers of the past, he aspired to present a comprehensive vision of reality. However, he was at the same time deeply conscious of Kant's critical approach and accepted his criticism of all traditional systems of metaphysics (Gardiner, 1977, 30). Although systematic, Schopenhauer's philosophical enterprise can thus be described as both modern and critical. Through his concept of will, he made an impact on later thinkers, particularly on Nietzsche and Heidegger (see Young 1996, 162–80).

Modern philosophy is grounded, on the one hand, in the concept of subjectivity that can be traced to Descartes, and on the other hand, in the concept of will, that can be traced to Hobbes. With the development of modernity, emphasis was put to an increasing degree on the will. Seen from the modern perspective, as Schopenhauer notes, "whatever exists, exists only for the subject" (WWR I, 5). The human being ultimately becomes the frame of reference for everything – the subject who by his will arranges things according to himself. If, in the Cartesian vision of the world, the subject is regarded as a dispassionate theoretical observer, independent of the external world or reality, in the Hobbesian vision, which is also Schopenhauer's, we do not know objects in a detached, neutral way, but rather in "relation to the will," that is, in relation to our desires, inclinations and interests, of which we, who tend to idealize the source of our actions, often remain ignorant. Whether we are dealing with ordinary or scientific knowledge, "knowledge is completely the servant of the will," and this "subjection of knowledge to the will" can be eliminated only by way of "exception" (WWR I, 176–77).[1] The Cartesian duality between subject and object, the contrast between inner subjective consciousness and external objective reality, is thus overcome. We cannot separate the way in which objects present themselves to us from our own modes of thought and perception. Subject and object are interdependent. The phenomenal world, the world we empirically experience as an object for a subject, is, then, our own idea or representation (*Vorstellung*). The world in reality, the thing-in-itself "of which all representation is the phenomenon, the visibility, the objectivity" is the will (*Wille*) (WWR I, 110).[2]

With Nietzsche and later modern thinkers, the concept of will is radically reinterpreted and becomes of paramount importance. In Heidegger's interpretation, as reflected in his discussion of the Nietzschean will-to-power, the will to control everything is the ultimate manifestation of the spirit of modernity, of the age that can be characterized by the dominance of expansive technology and the emergence of global political ideologies. Applied to architectural theory, the will-to-power finds its expression in the requirement that modern architecture should reflect the will of the age and reject the past. When such a requirement was made in actual practice, whether by the government or by members of the avant-garde, such as the left-wing Futurists or the right-wing Expressionists, it had strong political connotations. To quote David Capon (1999, vol. 1, 265): "Among the concepts central to politics are those of will and

power, and those emerged in architecture at the beginning of the twentieth century as a general attitude of rebellion and radicalism." However, although through his concept of will and, as we shall see, through his structural functionalism, Schopenhauer made a contribution to modern architectural theories, he cannot be blamed for these extreme developments. It is an exaggeration to say that his work "marks the boundary between the classical and modern paradigms of architectural knowledge" (Schwarzer 1996, 277).[3] Far from annexing architecture "to the subjective will" (ibid.), he attempted to give it an objective foundation. Rather than being a radical, he was a traditionalist, a defender of Classicism, a modern thinker who, with a surprising classical twist, attempted to freeze the will in the Platonic Ideas.

2. Schopenhauer's Architectonic Idealism

Schopenhauer's aesthetics is based on three major concepts: the will, the Idea and the pure subject of knowledge. The will is the "innermost essence, the kernel," of whatever exists and is described by him as "incessant impulse," "eternal becoming" or "endless striving" (WWR I, 110). It is manifested in every force of nature, as well as in human conduct, and can be discerned in our own inner experience. In all our wishing, fearing, loving, hating, hoping, desiring or striving, we are essentially will, and our actions are acts of "will objectified, i.e., translated into perception" (WWR I, 100). In fact, all bodily movements, not only those following a deliberate choice, but also involuntary movements, are objective manifestations of the will. Moreover, the whole phenomenal world, all empirical reality, is the outcome of will's objectification. The will objectifies itself in grades or distinct stages. Some phenomena manifest will more than others. There is, for example, a higher degree of objectification of will in a plant than in a stone, and still higher degrees of objectification in an animal and ultimately in a human being. The lowest grades of the will's objectification are manifested by the universal forces of nature; the highest, in human individuality (WWR I, 130–31). The ideal patterns of these objectifications are, as Schopenhauer calls them, the (Platonic) Ideas. Each stage of objectification, as expressed in an Idea, is likewise expressed in innumerable individual phenomena corresponding to this particular ideal pattern and having a real existence. At higher stages of objectification – in animals and human beings – the will generates intellect, a knowing consciousness. According to Schopenhauer, the "necessity of consciousness is brought about by the fact that, in consequence of an organism's enhanced complication and thus of its more manifold and varied needs, the acts of its will must be guided by *motives*, no longer by mere stimuli, as in the lower stages" (WWR II, 250). The purpose of intellect, then, is to serve the needs of a will-full individual being, to provide the basic knowledge needed for his survival, a knowledge of useful ends. At this stage, all knowledge, including scientific knowledge, remains subordinate to the will. Yet, Schopenhauer asserts, there finally occurs a certain transcending of the workings of will that allows us to rise into a state of pure knowing, by which things are considered "without interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively" (WWR I, 196). The individual can rise above his own willing and become the pure, will-less subject of knowing.

For Schopenhauer, the transition from the willing individual to the pure subject of knowledge, which takes place when "knowledge tears itself free from the service of the

will" (WWR I, 178), is an exception rather than a rule. The domain for this occurrence is neither everyday life nor science, but art (WWR I, 177).[4] When we are engaged in daily activities or scientific research, he suggests, and concentrate on possible uses and effects of things, we may learn to be rational, prudent and practical, but as we remain subjected to the will, we are at the same time committed to an unending, illusory, and often disappointing, and even unworthy quest, which causes us to suffer and offers only brief moments of fulfillment: "All will springs from lack, from deficiency, and thus from suffering" (WWR I, 196). It is only in art and philosophy, activities that in Schopenhauer's view involve pure contemplation, that we are elevated out of the stream of willing and begin to comprehend things free from their relation to will, i.e., disinterestedly and objectively.[5] We are emancipated from the exigencies and necessities of practical life, and gain a temporary release from suffering. Submerged in the aesthetic contemplation of a work of art, we become one with the object of our perception and lose all the individuality that differentiates us from others. Simultaneously, we raise ourselves "from knowledge of particular things to knowledge of Ideas" (WWR I, 176). Particular things that we perceive become representatives of their Ideas, and hence, timeless – they do "no longer stand in the stream of time and of all other relations" (WWR I, 197). For Schopenhauer, art is a form of knowledge and its purpose is to reveal not what is merely relative and accidental, but what is truly universal, essential and unchanging in the world, "and therefore, known with equal truth for all time" (WWR I, 184), namely the Ideas. Architecture, considered as a fine art and apart from its application to practical ends, has for him "no purpose other than that of bringing to clearer perceptiveness some of those Ideas that are the lowest grades of the will's objectivity" (WWR I, 214). Such Ideas include the most universal qualities of stone, such as gravity, rigidity, cohesion, hardness – "those first, simplest and dullest visibilities of the will" (ibid.).

Schopenhauer follows Kant in asserting that a detachment from interest, or, as he would say, a silencing of the will, is the indispensable condition for the artistic frame of mind. He admits that buildings may be erected to serve useful purposes. However, he argues that their aesthetic qualities must be judged independently of their utility and of any other outer arbitrary end (WWR I, 217). Hence, he opposes the Functionalist and Romantic theories of those among his contemporaries who saw architecture's main task as consisting in exhibiting a specific function of a building or in expressing some spiritual ideas or meanings. For him, the purpose of architecture is to reveal the Ideas that are the lowest stages of will's objectification. For this reason, architecture occupies the lowest place in the order of the various individual arts – an order which, according to Schopenhauer, reflects the hierarchy of these stages. At the low stages, he adds, "we see its [the will's] inner nature revealing itself in discord; for, properly speaking, the conflict between gravity and rigidity is the sole aesthetic material of architecture" (WWR I, 214). The conflict between gravity and rigidity, as he describes it, does not end in victory for either side. The mass of the building has a continual tendency to collapse and adhere to the earth, pulled toward it by the force of gravity – one form in which the will here appears – while rigidity – also a form and objectification of the will – resists. The main problem for architecture is "to make this conflict appear with perfect distinctness in many different ways," it solves the problem "by depriving these indestructible forces of the shortest path to their satisfaction, and keeping them in suspense through a circuitous path" (WWR I, 214). The beauty of a building is to be found in

its ability to display the forces of gravity and rigidity in the most distinct and yet varied manner – not in the degree of its conformity to the outward arbitrary human end or in its symmetry or proportion. Again, what architecture communicates to us is neither function nor meaning nor form, but rather the existence of those fundamental forces of nature, the first Ideas, the lowest stages of will's objectivity.

In the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer somewhat revises his view of the conflict between gravity and rigidity presented in the first volume. Instead of depriving gravity and rigidity of the shortest paths to their satisfaction and allowing them to reach it only indirectly, architecture "avoids everything purposeless" and attains its ends "always by the shortest and most natural path" (WWR II, 415). Architecture is tasteless, Schopenhauer asserts, when it "looks in everything for useless roundabout ways, and delights in arbitrary methods" (WWR II, 414–15). This change in his theory does not affect his view of the sole and constant theme of architecture, which he still sees as being the conflict between gravity and rigidity, but this conflict is now described as a relationship between "support and load." Its fundamental law is that "no load may be without sufficient support and no support without a suitable load" (WWR II, 411). Furthermore, this modification emphasizes what would become the leading motive of Schopenhauer's later view of architecture, which may be termed "architectonic idealism." Architecture aims at finding a visually ideal solution to the conflict between gravity and rigidity; it looks for the "exactly appropriate" relationship between load and support. Since only the shortest and most natural way should be used to represent it, the conflict between gravity and rigidity must necessarily become manifest in whichever architectonic style would present it in that particular way. For Schopenhauer, such a style is represented by Classical architecture, which, he believes, was essentially completed and perfected by the ancient Greeks and is no longer capable of being enriched to any significant degree. The modern architect, he says, cannot "depart from the rules and modes of the ancients without being on the path of degeneration" (WWR II, 416).

3. An Argument against Hegel

Schopenhauer's position can be elucidated by referring to the architectural debate in Germany, which at the beginning of nineteenth century was significantly animated by the question of whether medieval Gothic architecture was relevant as a model that could serve the needs of the present. The Classical ideal, which Johann Wickelmann attempted to set up as a norm against what he saw as the decline of art during its later developments, was challenged by the Romantics. The writings of Goethe, who in his earlier works took a stand against Classicism, and of Schlegel, who in a manner characteristic of that time started to use "Gothic" and "German" interchangeably, were particularly influential in the course of the debate and helped to formulate a new view of Gothic architecture, in which it was regarded as the national style of the Germans. However, the greatest impact on Schopenhauer's contemporaries was perhaps made by Hegel, who saw in Gothic the style that was especially appropriate to the expression of Christian spirituality, and, as Kruft (1994, 302) maintains, "dictated attitudes toward Gothic in Germany until well into the twentieth century." Although Schopenhauer does

not mention Hegel by name in the context of his discussion of architecture, it was against him and other supporters of Gothic that he directed the argument presented in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*.

Schopenhauer's antipathy toward Hegel is well known. Even as early as his first, trial lecture at the University of Berlin, on March 23, 1820, Schopenhauer attacked Hegel's views before the faculty, including Hegel himself. Later, his animosity led him to schedule his lectures at precisely the same time as Hegel was lecturing. In *The World as Will and Representation*, he frequently refers to "the shallowness, lack of culture and of knowledge brought about by Hegel" (WWR II, 303). The reasons for this hostility, however, do not seem to be personal but rather philosophical. Schopenhauer considered the Hegelian system of metaphysics a construction built out of abstract concepts, and the historicism expressed in it – namely, to "comprehend the history of the world as a planned whole," ordered to progress in a dialectical pattern – a misconception (WWR II, 442). His world as will and representation simply could not be reconciled with Hegel's ever-changing world as spirit.

For Hegel, art, religion and philosophy are the three realms of the absolute spirit, in other words, the three ways of apprehending the Absolute. He uses the terms "the Absolute," "the absolute spirit," "the Divine" and "the truth" interchangeably. "Art has no other mission," he says, "but to bring before sensuous contemplation the truth as it is in the spirit" (Hegel 1975, 623). Thus art is a way of bringing to our consciousness and expressing the absolute spirit: a way which is an immediate and therefore a *sensuous* knowing, "a knowing, in the form and shape of the sensuous and objective itself, in which the Absolute is presented to contemplation and feeling" (Hegel 1975, 101). In Hegel's view, nature has no meaning in itself. It is the human mind, the medium for the existence and appearance of the Absolute, which gives a subjective inner life and spiritual meaning to nature (Hegel 1975, 623). Since the primary task of art is to reshape "the external environment of the spirit and so to build into what has no inner life of its own a meaning and a form which remain external to it" (Hegel 1975, 631), it is architecture to which such a task clearly falls. By reshaping that which is objective in itself, the physical world of nature, architecture prepares the way for the actuality of the truth to be manifested. Therefore, conceptually if not historically, architecture is the first of the fine arts, their beginning and point of departure. It objectifies the sense of our being in the world, the sense in which we understand ourselves. Its main task consists in manipulating external, inorganic nature in such a way that it becomes, in its artistic treatment, cognate with the mind. Architecture is thus a meaning-granting activity. We build to provide enclosures for both ourselves and the images of our gods, as well as to affirm and to express in the sensuous the Absolute as it appears in the human mind in the form of our self-knowledge.

In accordance with his concept of history, based on the triadic dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, Hegel traces the development of architecture through Symbolic, Classical and Romantic periods. Symbolic architecture, identified by him with the ancient architectonic structures of Babylonia, Egypt and India, "which stand there independently in themselves, as it were like works of sculpture, and which carry their meanings in themselves and not in some external aim and need" (Hegel 1975, 632), is self-sufficient with respect to its meaning. The end, the expression of the Absolute, and architecture as the means to that expression are not yet separate. The Symbolic

building takes for its content that which is considered as the Absolute and the truth by the people, and presents this content symbolically in its construction. Gradually, however, architecture becomes subservient to purposes outside itself. It is no longer purely independent and self-sufficient with respect to meaning. In the Classical period, it abandons its symbolic form and leaves the expression of the Absolute to other arts, particularly to sculpture (Hegel 1975, 653). Thus, a separation between the end and the means occurs. The beauty of the Classical building, freed from the symbolic, consists solely in its appropriateness to its purpose, in its being serviceable; and this purpose becomes what dominates the whole work and determines its form. Lastly, in the third and final period, the Romantic, the two preceding periods are synthesized, and it is the Gothic cathedral that represents the full expression of Romantic architecture. Serving as a "house of God," it provides an environment for autonomously shaped spiritual meaning. At the same time, by rising high into the sky, it manifests self-subsistence in meaning and a pure independence that transcends any specific purpose. Its interior expresses a kind of lifting upwards, an elevation above the finite, inspiring a desire for transcendence. Through its vast expanse, it symbolizes eternity, in which everything particular and temporal is lost (Hegel 1975, 686). Hence, in the Romantic period, the end and the means are still distinguished, but the cathedral is again self-sufficient with respect to its meaning. Both its exterior and interior point toward the Absolute.

Schopenhauer's account of the arts, and particularly of architecture, clearly differs from Hegel's. The different purposes which they set forth for architecture indicate that they not only express themselves differently but also express very different things, so that they cannot be easily reconciled (see Korab-Karpowicz 1990, 167–76). According to Hegel, architecture narrates the journey that the spirit makes in its search for self-knowledge. Throughout history, humankind reduplicates itself as spirit – it brings itself into its own consciousness by forming an idea of itself, and by reshaping external things. The interpenetration of beauty and utility, of the independent and serviceable in a building, is the achievement of Classical architecture (Hegel 1975, 656). That which is divine or absolute is considered to manifest itself in the idealized bodily forms of things and beings, the highest of which is the human being itself. Yet for Hegel the journey of spirit cannot stop there. The divine must find a place outside of the human in the transcendent, as exemplified in the Gothic cathedral. For Schopenhauer, on the other hand, architecture reaches its completeness in ancient Greece because the classical building is a perfect manifestation of the conflict between gravity and rigidity. It brings these forces into perfect equilibrium. Any further development in architecture would thus be for him both superfluous and inadequate. It would destroy the perfect equilibrium of gravity and rigidity already achieved by the Greeks, and would introduce elements that could not be considered purely aesthetic.

Schopenhauer criticizes Hegel's philosophy of history. He says that all those who like Hegel "set up such constructions of the course of the world, or, as they call it, of history, have not grasped the principal truth of all philosophy, that . . . all becoming and arising are only apparent, that the Ideas alone are permanent" (WWR II, 443). In a Platonic fashion, he looks for the unchangeable and ever-permanent, the Ideas. True reality for him is not the human race, nations or any other abstract entities envisioned to be pursuing a historical course, but rather the life-course of each concrete individual; reality

is not the mere changing historical abstractions that Hegel concerned himself with, but is in fact the will. This is why for Schopenhauer the purpose of art is to bring into clear perceptibility the Ideas, the ideal patterns of everything, the products of will's objectification. He is an "architectural idealist," and his theory of architecture is actually a theory of idealized nature. Yet, he is also an "architectural conservative" who is unable to reconcile himself to the changing styles in architecture. Hegel, for whom the purpose of the science of aesthetics is to understand the phenomenon of art as an expression of human self-knowing in the world, can in fact (despite being accused of developing a dogmatic, abstract vision of history) provide us with a more adequate account of the phenomenon of architecture as it changes and develops than Schopenhauer.

4. In Defense of Classicism

For Schopenhauer, every genuine work of art reveals what is really essential and unchangeable in the world, namely, the Ideas, and thus it gives an answer to the question "What is life?" Classical architecture provides such an answer in reference to gravity and rigidity, bringing these conflicting forces into perfect equilibrium. Therefore, as architecture *per se*, it is complete and perfect. In classical buildings, constructed on the principle of "column and entablature," load and support are "completely separated," and in this way "the reciprocal effect of the two and their relation to each other become apparent" (WWR II, 411): "Entablature appears here as pure load, and the column as pure support" (WWR II, 412). Without an appropriate separation of load and support, Schopenhauer contends, a confusion of the two comes about, so that the aesthetic effect produced by the Greek style of building is lacking. In other architectural styles, particularly in those which make use of the vault, load and support "pass over and merge into one another" (WWR II, 411). There every stone is simultaneously load and support. A steeply pitched roof, characteristic of Gothic architecture, also exemplifies this confused state of affairs. It is neither load nor support, "for its two halves mutually support each other, but the whole has no weight corresponding to its extension" (WWR II, 412). Schopenhauer strongly disputes the idea that such a construction has any aesthetic quality. It "presents to an eye an extended mass; this is wholly foreign to the aesthetic end, serves a merely useful purpose, and consequently disturbs the aesthetics" (WWR II, 412). The proper theme of architecture, the conflict between gravity and rigidity, is in his view missing in this case, and the same can in general be said of all Gothic architecture: "Our pleasure in Gothic works certainly rests for the most part on the association of ideas and on historical reminiscences, and hence on feelings that are foreign to art" (WWR II, 417). Such considerations lead him to uphold Classical architecture as the highest, most perfect style of building, and, in opposition to the views of Hegel and others, to deny a similar status to the Gothic. To treat the latter as equal to the style of the ancient Greeks, he says, "is a barbarous presumption that must not for one moment be allowed" (WWR II, 416–17).

Since the ideal patterns of the will's objectification are the Ideas, and since the artist is one who can make these Ideas appear by means of the representation of particular things, art, which is regarded by Schopenhauer as a form of knowledge, can present things objectively, as they are in reality. But if art presumes to be "original,"

and, instead of revealing the Ideas, is guided by some arbitrary principle, it immediately goes astray (WWR II, 421). The same applies to architecture. Schopenhauer's criticism of the Gothic style centers on the notion that it is subjected to "an arbitrary will," guided by "extraneous concepts" (WWR II, 417). The aesthetic aim of creating the ideal visual solution to the conflict between rigidity and gravity does not inform Gothic works. In such buildings,

> the horizontal line, which is that of the load, has almost entirely vanished, and the action of gravity appears only indirectly, disguised in arches and vaults; whereas the vertical line, which is that of support, alone prevails, and renders palpable to the senses the victorious action of rigidity in excessively high buttresses, towers, turrets, and spires without number. (WWR II, 417)

Schopenhauer is ready to concede to Gothic architecture a certain beauty. He admits that although the exterior façade of a Classical building is preferable, the flat ceiling of its interior may seem depressive in comparison with the interior of a medieval cathedral. The effect of the latter's groined vault impresses the mind and "promises eternal security." Its vertical, soaring structure, representing "the entire subjugation of gravity to rigidity," gives it the sublime character that is commonly attributed to it. But, on the whole, all this is "a mere pretense, a fiction testified by an illusion" (WWR II, 417–18). In the illusory and unnatural architecture of the Gothic period, the arbitrary displaces the purely rational. Human subjectivity replaces pure will-less knowledge. Only Classical architecture, which so "openly and naively" displays the conflict between rigidity and gravity, can be apprehended in "a purely objective sense" and regarded as properly beautiful; the Gothic is merely subjective (WWR II, 417). It expresses ideas that are not purely aesthetic.

Recognizing that a thing is beautiful has, in Schopenhauer's view, two implications. First, the sight of the thing makes us objective. While viewing the thing we regard ourselves no longer as the individuals that we are, but as pure, will-less subjects of knowing. Second, we recognize in the thing not an individual entity, but an Idea (WWR I, 209). Thus, to contemplate a building artistically is to see in it a timeless Idea, and not just to perceive it as an individual building, constructed at a given time, occupying a specific space, and serving a particular purpose. Consequently, insofar as architecture reveals the Ideas, it is beautiful and has an objective dimension. It exhibits the conflict between rigidity and gravity, which is "an actual and true one established in nature" (WWR II, 417). Schopenhauer denies the existence of this beauty and objectivity in Gothic architecture, whose value rests merely on subjective "association of ideas" (WWR II, 418), as well as in any more modern style of building that departs from that of the ancient Greeks. It is clear that, contrary to Schwarzer's interpretation of his architectural theory, he does not attempt to annex architecture to "the subjective Will," but to give it an objective foundation.[6] Properly speaking, there is no such thing as the "subjective" will for Schopenhauer. Although he acknowledges that we can indeed have an inner, subjective experience of the will in our desires and inclinations, the will as the metaphysical thing-in-itself stands beyond the categories of subjectivity and objectivity. It cannot be "absolutely and completely knowable" (WWR II, 197). It becomes objectified in the phenomena that can be known objectively as their Ideas only if we

ourselves become objective as pure, will-less subjects of knowledge. Classical architecture is then objective for Schopenhauer because by exhibiting the conflict between rigidity and gravity, it presents things as they really are in nature. Any departure from its rules and modes is a step on the downward path of degeneration, of misrepresentation of what really is. In order to appreciate its beauty we must free ourselves from our will-full individuality and thereby become objective ourselves.

Unlike the traditional defenders of Classicism, Schopenhauer does not regard the beauty of architecture as a result of symmetry or proportion. In contrast to Kant and others for whom aesthetic effect is related mainly to form, he argues that beauty does not reside in "an apparent appropriateness without purpose," but rather arises "from the undisguised presentation of the [aesthetic] ends" to present an ideal solution to the conflict between rigidity and gravity (WWR II, 416). Symmetry and proportion are for him "something purely geometrical, properties of space, and not Ideas" and as such, "they cannot be a theme for a fine art" (WWR II, 414). However, if this is indeed the case that "beautiful architecture selects nothing but regular figures, made from straight lines or regular curves" (WWR II, 415), and thus produces symmetry, it is because form follows structure. At the core of Schopenhauer's Classicism lies his structural functionalism.

5. Structure, Function and Form

Various architectural theories have been developed around the basic categories, concepts, and ideas describing the different aspects of a building (see Capon 1999). Vitruvius, a Roman architect and theorist, author of *De architectura libri decem*, stated that buildings had to satisfy three requirements of equal significance: *firmitas*, *utilitas* and *venustas*, which can be translated as strength, utility and beauty (Kruft 1994, 24). The Vitruvian triad, in which *strength* referred to construction and materials, *utility* to the function and use of buildings, and *beauty* to aesthetic requirements, especially regular form and proportion, has been very influential for many centuries and served as a foundation for Classicism.[7] Although it had never attained exclusive dominance in the area of architectural theory, it did prescribe its basic character from the time of the Renaissance to the eighteenth century (Kruft 1994, 72). With its emphasis on the equal value of construction, function, and form, the Vitruvian system represented a unified, balanced view of architecture. In contrast, emphasis on just one category, be it form, function, meaning, or construction, has led to the fragmentation of traditional architectural theory into distinct modern doctrines, such as Formalism, Functionalism, Expressionism, Futurism and Constructivism. What is notable about Schopenhauer's project is that, although it defends Classical architecture, at the same time, like modern doctrines, it emphasizes only one category. The Vitruvian triad is in Schopenhauer reduced to one aspect, *firmitas*, interpreted as structure, from which another aspect, *venustas*, interpreted as form and symmetry, is derived. Although he acknowledges that buildings are usually erected to serve some practical ends, and thus recognizes the validity of *utilitas*, neither the function nor the use of a building is regarded by him as an aesthetic category. He would reject the Functionalist claim that whatever is not functional is not beautiful.

One influential concept that came from Vitruvius was the idea that architecture had its foundations in nature. Architecture, although not a literal imitation of nature, could find in it a measure of proportion. A well-shaped human body, the "Vitruvian man," was regarded as an ideal of geometrical perfection, the model from which numerical proportions should be derived (Kruft 1994, 27–28). The proportions of columns, in particular, were seen as analogous to those of the human body. Doric columns reflected the proportions of the male human figure; Ionic and Corinthian columns, those of the female figure (Kruft 1994, 178 and 211).

Schopenhauer breaks radically with this Vitruvian tradition. He refutes the idea of deriving architectural proportions from models found in nature. He discusses the issues of form, symmetry and proportion solely in terms of the aspect of structure: load and support.

> Now all the laws of columnar arrangement, and consequently the form and proportion of the column in all its parts and dimensions down to the smallest detail, follow from the conception of the adequately appropriate support to a given load, a conception well understood and consistently followed out; therefore to this extent they are determined *a priori*. It is then clear how absurd is the idea, so often repeated, that the trunks of trees or even the human form (as unfortunately stated even by Vitruvius, iv, 1) were the prototype of the column. The form of the column would then be for architecture a purely accidental one taken from outside.
>
> (WWR II, 413–14)

The objection could be made that Schopenhauer's discussion of the columnar arrangements in terms of load and support is brief and vague, and does not really distinguish between the major styles of Classical architecture, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. Nevertheless, his underlying theory is clear. The column, like all other architectural elements, derives its form and proportion from structural considerations: "Everything in the column, . . . the proportion of its height to its thickness, of both to the intervals between columns, and that of the whole row to the entablature and the load resting on it, all are the accurately calculated result from the ratio of the necessary support to the given load" (WWR II, 413). Further, to the degree that forms in architecture are determined by structure, nothing is arbitrary. Every part of the building, "pillar, column, arch, entablature, or door, window, staircase, or balcony, attains its end in the simplest and most direct way" (WWR II, 415). Although architecture does not imitate natural forms, it should nevertheless create in the spirit of nature and do nothing superfluous, nothing in vain (WWR II, 415). As a result, we should expect from beautiful architecture that it attains its end in the most simple and natural way, avoiding everything purposeless, and – in accordance with structural requirements – obtaining the greatest regularity of its constituent forms and a corresponding rationality in their proportions.

Schopenhauer goes on to attack the "tasteless style of architecture" that employs devices that are structurally unnecessary: "In this way it hits upon aimlessly broken entablatures running in and out, grouped columns, fragmentary cornices on door arches and gables, senseless volutes, spirals, and the like" (WWR II, 416). The beauty of architecture arises from the undisguised presentation of its aesthetic end, which is to display the forces inherent in the building material in the most distinct and varied manner (WWR I, 214). It is found in the suitability of all parts of the building to serve

this end, and not in any arbitrary, subjective purpose that may be given to them. For this reason Schopenhauer, as theorists including Winckelmann had earlier done, considers ornament to be an inessential element of architecture. Ornamental work belongs, in his view, "to sculpture and not to architecture, and is merely tolerated as an additional embellishment, which might be dispensed with" (WWR II, 215). His position resembles that of the eighteenth-century Italian architectural theorist, Carlo Lodoli, and can be best described as structural functionalism. As Kruft (1994, 198) describes Lodoli's position, "Everything that does not have a specific [structural] function in a building must be regarded as a non-integral component and excluded from architecture."[8] Form must be determined by structure and by the nature of the material. However, if for Lodoli "differences in materials dictate differences in form" (Kruft 1994, 198), for Schopenhauer, there is no such a diversity. In his conservatism, he regards stone as the only appropriate building material for architecture.

Schopenhauer's emphasis on structure, "of the necessary support to the given load" that depends on the building material, has anticipated modern thinking about construction and has certain points in common with the theory of Constructivism. In their manifestos, the twentieth-century constructivists emphasize construction and materials over form (Capon 1999, vol. 2, 145). They consider building material and its expression to be the main issue in architecture. However, if for the constructivists the materials are "glass, iron, and concrete," for Schopenhauer it is stone. Furthermore, the main task of architecture is for him the presentation not of building material, but of the forces of gravity and rigidity, those primary Ideas that are the lowest grades of will's objectivity. Hence, whereas the constructivist thinking looks to produce designs that can, by incorporating suitable forms, give new building technologies and materials their finest expression, Schopenhauer takes us back to the idealized, stone-built architecture of ancient Greece. Since he asserts that architecture affects us not only mathematically (because of formal characteristics such as symmetry and proportion), but also dynamically (because of the properties of the various building materials), he explicitly denies the aesthetic value of works of architecture made of timber, brick or others materials (WWR I, 215). Only a construction made of stone, he suggests, can properly present the forces of gravity and rigidity in their continuous interplay. These forces reveal themselves "much more feebly in a wooden building" (WWR I, 215). Their presentation requires "large masses, in order to be visible, and indeed to be capable of being felt" (WWR II, 414). In short, Schopenhauer sees architecture as a manifestation of the forces of gravity and rigidity, which can best be exhibited in stone buildings of substantial dimensions, in which form follows structure, and everything that does not have a specific structural function is avoided; that is, in the buildings of the ancient Greeks. These classical monuments move us out of what the constructivists describe as our "machine age" into a timeless dimension.

6. Architecture and Contemplation

Debate concerning architecture has a long history. The strictly architectural issue that Schopenhauer considers, the relation between structure and form, had also been discussed by his predecessors.[9] There is no reason to believe that his theory, in which he

attempted to defend Classicism and provide architecture with an objective structural basis, has made a significant impact on modern architecture. As elaborated in innumerable architectural doctrines, including Formalism, Minimalism, Mannerism, Functionalism, Rationalism, Positivism, Expressionism, Futurism, Constructivism, Modernism, and Radicalism, modernity becomes synonymous with subjectivity, with self-expression, with the arbitrary. It becomes fully subjected to the will, to endless striving, from which it neither seeks nor even wants any escape. It remains fully submerged in time, in dynamism and change, and so can perhaps offer us momentary pleasure, but not lasting happiness. What is unique about Schopenhauer's theory of architecture is that it is a part of his solution to the problem of will's dominance. Recognizing that the traditional solutions, religious, philosophical or whatever they may be, are no longer workable, he uses art to take us away from the temporal and arbitrary domain.

For Schopenhauer, the human being is not simply a Hobbesian egoistic animal, an impetuous impulse of willing, or a mere embodiment of desire, but also a subject of pure knowing. The transition to the state of pure knowing occurs when individual things become representatives of their Ideas, and it is precisely in this that their beauty consists (WWR I, 200). Since all things reveal the Ideas through which the will objectifies itself, each has its own characteristic beauty. Beautiful works of architecture, like beautiful works of art in general, and also beautiful natural forms, take us away from the state of willing. Upon seeing a beautiful building, "the beholder is emancipated from the kind of knowledge possessed by the individual, which serves the will and follows the principle of sufficient reason, and is raised to that of the pure, will-free subject of knowing" (WWR I, 216). Further, the beautiful in architecture is greatly enhanced by light. In "full sunshine with the blue sky as a background" buildings "gain a twofold beauty; and by the moonlight they reveal quite a different effect" (WWR I, 216). Bright illumination makes all structural parts clearly visible, which in turn can affect the way the light is reflected, reduced, intercepted or admitted. Hence, Schopenhauer says, architecture reveals "not only gravity and rigidity, but at the same time the nature of light" (WWR I, 216). As the condition for most perfect knowledge, "light is the largest diamond in the crown of beauty" (WWR I, 203). Contemplation of the beautiful effect of light on the masses of stone shaped by architecture moves us into the state of pure knowing, as all beauty does. However, this effect on the beholder is achieved only to a slight degree by inferior buildings (WWR I, 310).

Schopenhauer regards the Greek style of building as the timeless model for all architecture. His defense of Classicism is based not on appreciation of beauty that results from symmetry and proportion, which is for him of secondary importance, but on consideration of structural forces. Consequently, he considers ornament as nonessential. One can, however, argue that the idealized Classical architecture he advocates has little to do with the actual buildings of the ancients, which are characterized not merely by proportions or by certain materials, but also by ornament (human and animal figures, and plant motives), and do not really follow his structural rules. The beauty of classical buildings is based on the architectural norms of the ancients which were the products of long experience and custom, not of abstract reason.[10] Schopenhauer wants to reduce a complex phenomenon – the diversity of architectural forms – to a simple principle: the conflict between gravity and rigidity. Subjected to rationalization as it is, his vision of Greece is thus completely modern. It is an expression of what can be

described as "stylistic or ideological monism," the dominance of one architectural style or one ideology, resulting "in a monotony that people hate."[11] Such a vision denies stylistic pluralism and eclecticism. Hence, while advocating Classicism and seeking to escape the state of willing, Schopenhauer paradoxically falls prey to the modern logic of domination.

Schopenhauer attempts to escape willing and bring us to pure knowing. This is a completely admirable effort. What he does not seem to recognize, however, is that escape cannot be provided by external art forms, whose beauty can be objectively described; nor can any help come from exterior light. Release from the state of willing can come only from our own minds. No example of beautiful architecture can ever transform an individual who is subject to his or her desires; while, on the other hand, the one who knows how to control those desires can find beauty even in a little thing.

See also 9 Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas; 16 Schopenhauer on the Metaphysics of Art and Morality.

Notes

1 Whereas, according to Schopenhauer, human knowledge can be liberated from subjection to the will by way of exception, in Hobbes's view, such a liberation is not possible. There is no disinterested, dispassionate knowledge. The human being is a "creature of interest." Reason serves the passions rather than controlling or restraining them (see Rapaczynski 1989, 64).

2 Schopenhauer accepted the Kantian distinction between phenomena and the thing-in-itself.

3 Although Schwarzer makes a number of correct observations, his interpretation of Schopenhauer's theory of architecture contains overstatements.

4 Schopenhauer, perhaps wrongly, represents science as guided by practical concerns, and thus denies any essential difference between ordinary and scientific knowledge.

5 According to Schopenhauer, what is common to art and philosophy is that they both emancipate us from the modes of thought that are related to everyday existence. Also, they both are forms of knowledge, providing us with an account of the world. However, art uses the language of perception; philosophy, the language of intellectual reflection.

6 Schwarzer's thesis that Schopenhauer tried to undermine an objective basis of architecture and "did not believe in the artistic potential of objectively described real forces" (Schwarzer 1996, 296) cannot be maintained.

7 Throughout the history of architectural theory, we find different interpretations of Vitruvian categories and their alternative translations. For example, they are also translated as *durability*, *convenience* and *beauty*, and as *firmness*, *commodity* and *delight* (see Capon 1999, vol. 1, 19–34).

8 It is not fully clear whether Lodoli's position can be described as structural functionalism or simply as functionalism. It all depends on whether the concept of function meant for him the use of the building or, as his exponent Francesco Algarotti (1712–1764) maintained, it was reduced to mean only the properties of the building materials. To compare Lodoli to Schopenhauer, I choose the latter interpretation.

9 A reflection on the relation between structure and form can already be found in Leone Battista Alberti (1404–1472), and is continued in writings of such theorists as Claude Perrault (1613–1688), Carlo Lodoli (1690–1761), Jean-Nicolaus-Louis Durand (1760–1834), Aloys Hirt (1759–1837), and of many others.

10 My contention is a restatement of an argument of Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778). While supporting the claims of Didascalo and arguing against the authority of Vitruvius and his followers, Piranesi maintained that it was custom, not Vitruvius, that fixed the architectural norms, and that rules such as those propounded by the latter never existed. While encouraging stylistic eclecticism and artistic freedom, Piranesi rejected contemporary architectural theory, whether exemplified by the simplistic functionalism of Lodoli or the "old monotonous style," which was for him rationalized Classicism (see Kruft 1994, 201–203).

11 Saying of Didascalo cited in Kruft (1994, 201).

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13

The Artist as Subject of Pure Cognition

MATTHIAS KOSSLER

In a crucial passage of the third book of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer describes the phenomenon of aesthetic contemplation as an event, in which one is "entirely *losing* oneself in this object . . . , i.e., precisely forgetting the individual one is" (WWR I, 178).[1] And he continues that "anyone caught up in this perception is at the same time no longer an individual – for the individual has lost itself precisely in this perception – but is *pure*, will-less, painless, timeless, *subject of cognition*" (WWR I, 178). A few pages later Schopenhauer identifies this mode of cognition with "*art*, the work of genius" (WWR I, 184). Genius is the

> capacity for maintaining a purely perceptual state, for losing oneself in perception, and for withdrawing from the service of the will the knowledge which originally existed only for this service. In other words, genius is the ability to leave entirely out of sight one's own interest, one's willing, one's purposes, and thus to discard one's own personality for a time, so as to remain *pure subject of cognition*, the clear eye of the world.
>
> (WWR I, 185–86)

As the topic of our chapter is exposed by these quotations, several questions do arise: What does "pure subject of cognition" mean? How can non-individual cognition exist? What kind is the relationship between pure cognition and cognition that is subject to the service of will? How is it possible to withdraw cognition from the service of will if cognition originally exists but to serve it? Why is the artist the one who is able to resign from the service by genius? Does not everybody have the capacity for aesthetic contemplation? The first questions refer to the philosophical concept of a pure subject of cognition and pure cognition, the latter to the phenomenon that is connected with this concept. Accordingly the following study will be divided into two main parts. The first one will deal with the pure subject of cognition in general, the second with the artist as purely cognizant subject.

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1. The Pure Subject of Cognition

1.1. Transcendentalism

"Pure" subject of cognition does *not* mean a subject without object. This is Schopenhauer's foundation of transcendental idealism that subject and object are correlatives. In his first published work, the dissertation, Schopenhauer states that in the same way as "with the subject immediately also the object is set (for otherwise even the word has no meaning) . . . with the object the subject is set, and being subject just means having an object, and being object means nothing than being cognized by a subject" (EFR, 51). But, while we can cognize objects, we do not know anything about the subject of cognition that we are ourselves. In his dissertation *On the Fourfold Root of Sufficient Reason* Schopenhauer divides possible objects into four classes which have the feature in common that "nothing existing by itself and independent, also nothing single and detached can become an object for us," but all our representations stand related to one another in a lawful, and with respect to its form, *a priori* determinable connection (FR, 42). As being the correlation to the different classes of objects the subject may be characterized as mind, sensuality, reason and self-consciousness; however, these names do not indicate any cognition of the subject but are mere expressions of different kinds of representations which consist of defined objects and their correlative subject. As necessary correlate of an object, the subject of cognition itself can never become an object of cognition. Besides the use of names reflecting the different classes of objects, only negative statements can be made about the subject of cognition. Since all forms of the principle of reason and thus all formal definitions of an object are dependent on the subject of cognition, those forms cannot be applied to it: the subject of cognition is beyond time and space, it is not subject to causality, it has no matter and no individuality for time and space are the principle of individuation.[2] Schopenhauer's concept of subject of cognition corresponds with Kant's transcendental subject (Malter 1991, esp. 65ff.), and its negative definitions are expressions of the fact that as condition of the objects of experience it transcends experience.

However, in contrast to Kant, Schopenhauer does not restrict experience to objects of outer sense. Even if we do not know anything about the subject of cognition we are able to cognize ourselves as subject of will by inner experience (EFR, 53). In this way the subject of will is object of the subject of cognition and at the same time we are immediately conscious of the identity of both. "The identity of the subject of will and the cognizant subject, by which necessarily the word 'I' includes both, is absolutely inexplicable"; and as such the identity is "the miracle *kat' exochen*" (EFR, 53).

So far Schopenhauer's theory of the subject of cognition had been developed in his first published work, as the metaphysics of will had not yet been founded. In his main work he changes his opinion about the inexplicability of the identity of the subject of will and the subject of cognition. The entire work, *The World as Will and Representation*, is as it were, an explanation of this coincidence.[3] And in the second edition of *On the Fourfold Root* he adds that the identity is the "knot of the world" (FR, 211), i.e., the place where the "deciphering of the world" (WWR II, 182) has to start from.

Pivotal to the explanation of the coincidence of subject of will and subject of cognition is the knowledge of the own body which leads to "an entirely unique sort of

cognition," whose truth is called by Schopenhauer the "philosophical truth *kat' exochen*" (WWR I, 102), in a way replacing the talk of a miracle. This cognition is not assignable to any of the forms of sufficient reason, but it can be traced back to the cognition of the subject of will. Already in the dissertation the cognition of the subject of will had been characterized as a very special kind of cognition. Certainly on the one hand because with the coincidence of subject and object the object – as Schopenhauer puts it later – was "precisely ceasing to be an object" (WWR I, 102). On the other hand, the subject of will had already been called an object "with a significant restriction" (EFR, 50), since not the subject of will as such is object for the inner sense but merely the singular acts of will from which one has to infer a unified subject of these acts. The subject of will derived from its actions in this way is the character of the individual.

In his main work Schopenhauer tries to solve these problems by introducing a new kind of relationship between will and action, replacing the causal model of the first draft. This relationship is characterized as "mirroring," "appearance," "visibility" and with its technical term "objectivation." Its model is the relationship between the act of will perceived by inner sense and the accompanying bodily action simultaneously perceived by outer sense; thus bodily action is nothing but the outer appearance of an internally realized process. A singular act of the body is the visibility of a singular act of will (and not its consequence), and the entire body is the visibility or objectivation of will as a whole. Subject of will and body are therefore identical, only distinguished into the inner and outer side of one and the same. The ceasing of the object of self-consciousness is prevented by the fact that the subject of will no longer has to be strictly and immediately object of cognition. The own body is object of self-consciousness since it is tied to the subject of will by the process of objectivation. To be more precise: neither the subject of will is object of self-consciousness, nor the body as it appears in time and space, but the process of objectivation itself which constitutes the identity of both (we will refer to this later in the discussion of the Idea in art). And the problematical unity of the subject of willing now is ensured through the unity of the body.

Here is not the place to elaborate on the cognition of body which lays the foundation of the metaphysics of will. We shall concentrate on the facets that are significant to our topic. The most important point in this regard is the fact that the subject of will and the subject of cognition which coincide are not separable from the body. Human being is no "winged head of a bodiless cherub" and its "cognition which is the conditioning bearer of the entire world as representation, is nonetheless altogether mediated by a body" (WWR I, 99). By connecting the subject of cognition to the body, Schopenhauer diverges from Kant's concept of transcendental subject. In Kant the transcendental subject is nothing but the unity of apperception, the logical condition of any synthesis of ideas. It is strictly distinguished from the empirical and individual "I" which is defined by its actions, experiences and bodily appearance (see Booms 2003, 58ff., 86ff.; Janaway 1989, 84ff.). Schopenhauer, in contrast, ties together subject of cognition, subject of will and body. However, the coincidence of subject of cognition and subject of will still lacks an explanation. In the treatise *On Will in Nature* there are two apparent contradictory statements that make the matter even more difficult. First, he considers the claim that "cognition is conditioned by will" to be a "fundamental truth of my doctrine," and a few pages later "the absolute separation of will from cognition" is called a "main feature of my doctrine" (WN, 24ff., 35). Before we turn back to the question what "pure

subject of cognition" means – for it cannot be the transcendental subject in the sense of Kant and Fichte – we have to cast a glance at the metaphysics of will.

1.2. The Intellect as Servant of Will

Taking the terms from Kant, Schopenhauer characterizes the relationship between will and body as that between the thing-in-itself and its appearance. It is generally known that he transferred the relationship between will and the own body by analogy to all representations so that "what in ourselves we call will" (see, e.g., WWR I, 105)[4] is the one thing-in-itself of all phenomena, or the unified essence of the world. Leaving aside an analysis of the complicated structure of the so-called "argument of analogy," the result of it is the dependence of the world of representation on will. Part of the will is the own body and since cognition is tied to the body also the intellect is dependent on will. "For the intellect is as transitory as the brain whose product, or more precisely, whose action it is. The brain, however, is like the entire organism the product, the appearance of will; in short: it is secondary, while the will alone is everlasting" (WWR II, 200).

This quote is instructive with regard to Schopenhauer's procedure in the second book of *The World as Will and Representation*. Under the counter he changes the relationship between essence and appearance into a kind of production. On that basis Schopenhauer builds the fundamental doctrine of the primacy of will over intellect. On the one hand, it is metaphysically grounded in the theory that the objectivation of the will as thing-in-itself appears as an evolution of species that objectify the will in a clearer and clearer way up to animals and human beings endowed with intellect. Intellect is therefore a tool in the struggle for life produced by the metaphysical will for objectifying itself in a manifold of appearances. The will shows up in individuals as will to live. On the other hand, Schopenhauer states a lot of psychological observations to prove the primacy of the will empirically and trace it back to its metaphysical ground (see WWR II, 201ff.). The result is that intellect as a product of the brain which again is a "product" of will is totally in the service of the will to live, being used in the struggle for life and supplying the will with motives and desire.

The serving function of intellect is realized by the principle of sufficient reason. While in the dissertation the principle of reason had been taken up as the natural form of science (EFR, 3), it is in the mature philosophy an expression of the will to live. By establishing the different forms of sufficient reason, the intellect creates the possibility to refer all representations to the interest of the individual will; and with the faculty of reason motives can be presented to the will independent of the actual presence of objects. Reason "has one function" (WWR I, 38): formation of concepts which are independent of time because of their abstract generality.

The fact that the way intellect acts is dependent on will opens the possibility of a different mode of the intellect which is not subject to the principle of reason; in other words: it leaves room for the thought that the intellect may get rid of the service of will. For, if will as the thing-in-itself is free because it is not subject to the principle of reason (WWR I, 113; 286), the way the intellect works in the service of will is no natural condition but is based on the power of its master. Of course this possibility is not to be understood as if the individual were able to decide whether its cognition is according

to the principle of reason or not. The freedom that underlies this possibility is the freedom of the will as thing-in-itself which by the same reason why it is called free is also not individual. The way that may lead to a cognition independent of will must therefore not be sought after in a decision of the individual but in its ability to become aware of its own dependence of will by cognition itself. For this aspect of self-knowledge already seems to diverge from the service of will.

The alternative for an intellect independent of will saves the concept of a transcendental subject from being lost in a naturalistic view, since it puts the talk of body-connected cognition into perspective. The statement that the intellect is "produced" by the organism, which again is "produced" by will, expresses a way of thinking according to the principle of reason. The process of objectivation of will is thought of as a kind of causation. However, it had been a result of the considerations made subsequent to the dissertation that there is no kind of causality between will as thing-in-itself and its appearance. It must therefore be the case that the way the relationship between will and appearance is explained in the second book of *The World as Will and Representation* is inadequate. At this point the question arises if there are indications for a different kind of cognition which is not subject to the principle of reason and which is able to realize the objectivation of will in a more adequate way. Schopenhauer hopes to find such a kind of cognition in aesthetic contemplation and in art.

Thus the consideration of the world as representation as far as it has been explained in the manner of the principle of reason has to be completed by the second consideration of the world as representation: "The Representation Independent of the Principle of Sufficient Reason. The Platonic Idea: The Object of Art" (WWR I, 167). And since individuality, service of will and causal relationship belong to the sphere defined by the principle of reason, one meaning of "pure cognition" occurs that had not entered the discussion up to now. When intellect has resigned the service of will, the reference of cognition to individual interest is cut off and what remains is cognition purely for its own sake. Only pure cognition in this sense is able to realize the will as a whole as well as the world as a whole and the relation between both, while in service to will the intellect is restricted to the cognition of what one is willing now and here, but never of what one wills in general, and accordingly to the apprehension of particular representations. "The sole self-knowledge of the will as a whole is the representation as a whole, the whole world of perception. It is its objectivity, its revelation, its mirror" (WWR I, 165). These words with which Schopenhauer moves on to the third book of *The World as Will and Representation*, on aesthetics, clearly confirm that actual self-knowledge is not attainable but through aesthetic experience. Cognition purely for its own sake goes back to the Aristotelian concept of "theoria" and continues a long-lasting tradition of speculative thinking in the Middle Ages. Nietzsche criticized its revival in Schopenhauer's aesthetics in the chapter "On the Immaculate Cognition" of his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as an illusion. In order to place Schopenhauer in this discussion we have to ask what the subject of pure cognition is.

1.3. The Will-Less Subject of Cognition

Schopenhauer does not seem to explain how the transition from cognition under the principle of reason to will-less cognition really occurs. This seems to be obvious since

explanations follow the principle of reason and thus are not able to go beyond the sphere of the principle of reason. Therefore, will-less cognition is claimed to be an "exception," more emphasized to be "abnormal" (PP II, 97). The change from one kind of cognition to the other in which cognition is "tearing itself away from the service of will" happens immediately, it "occurs suddenly" and "at one single stroke" (WWR I, 178 ff.). The result of the change can only be analysed and linked to the requirements following the negative definition of will-less cognition given from the viewpoint of ordinary cognition. The latter includes absence of time, space and causality, absence of individuality, absence of relationship to the will.

For Schopenhauer, aesthetic contemplation (the counterpart of ordinary cognition) fulfills these requirements. In aesthetic contemplation of an object we do not care if the existence of the object is for the benefit for us or a disadvantage. We are not interested in its existence at all but merely in contemplating it. And since our interest and fear constitute our individuality which is mirrored by our body, we feel as if our individuality is lost in contemplation or forgotten for a time.[5] Aesthetic contemplation cannot really be intended, instead "everyone has to stand before a picture as before a prince, waiting to see whether it will speak and what it will say to him; and, as with the prince, so he himself must not address it, for then he would hear only himself" (WWR I, 407). Finally, we are looking at the object contemplated not as a particular phenomenon in time and space but as an exponent of all particular objects of the same kind or species, which Schopenhauer calls the "Platonic Idea."

In Schopenhauer's eyes the phenomenon of aesthetic contemplation thus proves the reality of will-less cognition.[6] Interpreting this fact on the background of the considerations made at the limits of the so-far-developed theory of cognition, he assigns the subject of pure knowledge and the Idea as its object to aesthetics. Both as well as their relation to each other are out of time and space, therefore without individuality and causality. In place of the relation between subject and object as being a motive for the individual willing subject, Schopenhauer uses the metaphorical expression "mirroring" which had already been used to characterize the non-causal relationship between will and appearance. The subject is nothing but a "clear mirror of the object, so that it is as if the object alone existed without anyone perceiving it, and one can thus no longer separate the perceiver from the perception, but the two have become one, since the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single perceptual image" (WWR I, 178ff.).

Being a mirror here is not to be understood as a thing consisting of matter, e.g., glass and metal, but is defined solely by the function of making visible things as they are. In this sense the subject is nothing but the visibility of the object, and "as the object also is here nothing but the representation of the subject, so the subject, by passing entirely into the perceived object, has become that object itself" (WWR I, 180).

Thus Schopenhauer combines the correlation of subject and object which constitutes transcendentalism with the objectivation of will as mirroring and with the coincidence of subject and object in self-consciousness. Aesthetic contemplation is therefore, as indicated above, true self-knowledge of the will as a whole by presenting the world as a whole. Only in so far as "a cognizing individual raises himself . . . to the pure subject of cognition, and precisely thereby raises the contemplated object to the Idea; the *world as representation* then stands out whole and pure, and the complete objectification of will takes place" (WWR I, 179).

It is obvious from this quote that the subject of aesthetic contemplation is the transcendental subject to which Schopenhauer turns back having passed through the difficulties resulting from the fact that the subject of cognition is tied to body and will. As we will see, even the artist cannot get rid of this fact despite his ability to forget it for a while. Now, the pure subject of cognition differs in a way from the transcendental subject as it had been introduced following Kant. While the latter had been the inexplicable correlate of the different classes of objects defined by the principle of reason, the pure subject of cognition which is to a certain extent self-cognizant is the correlate of the Idea. According to the classes of objects the subject had been called intellect, reason and sensuality, whereas as correlate of the Idea the subject is characterized solely by one faculty: thoughtful awareness (*Besonnenheit*). Thoughtful awareness is originally an aspect of ordinary reason but in aesthetics it is going beyond the cognition in service of the will since it is the "power of mind" (WWR I, 178) that tears away cognition from the service of the will. In order to know more about the thoughtful awareness or "reflectiveness of genius" (WWR II, 386), we have to take a look at its correlate, the Idea.

What Schopenhauer tells us about the Platonic Idea when he introduces the term at the beginning of book three, referring to Kant's thing-in-itself as well as to Plato, seems to be neither clear nor very instructive. The Idea is, as he writes, object like any representation but

> has laid aside merely the subordinate forms of the phenomenon, all of which we include under the principle of sufficient reason; or rather it has not yet entered into them; but it has retained the most general form, namely that of representation in general, of being object for a subject.
>
> (WWR I, 175)

If we recall the general form of the principle of sufficient reason where it is said that nothing can become object for us which is not related to another one as its reason, then this definition of Idea is quite impossible. The Idea laying aside the "subordinate" forms "the general expression of which is the principle of sufficient reason" (WWR I, 175) simply ceases to be an object. But if we take into account Schopenhauer's phrase that it "has not yet entered into them," this reminds us of the fact that the object of self-consciousness in the crucial cognition of one's own body (what Schopenhauer had called the "immediate object") is indeed not the body in time and space but rather the process of objectivation itself. Since the cognition of one's own body as objectivation of will is "the key to the essence of every phenomenon in nature" (WWR I, 105), the contemplation of the Idea which reveals the essence has to be comprehended as the cognition of the process of objectivation.

If one grasps this concept of Idea the roots of which can be traced back to the early handwritten notes of Schopenhauer (see MR I, 10ff.), some seemingly puzzling remarks on the Idea scattered across the main work become consistent. So when Schopenhauer distinguishes the Idea from the concept created by reason he compares the Idea with "a living organism, developing itself and endowed with generative force which brings forth that which had not been lying packaged within it" (WWR I, 235). The Idea is, as it were, half on the way from the entirely unperceivable and incomprehensible will as thing-in-itself to its appearance in time and space. Since, as we have seen, cognition

under the principle of reason as being confined to mere relations is unable to grasp the essence of things in any way, ordinary appearance is "only an indirect objectification of the thing-in-itself (which is will)" and thus inadequate, whereas the Idea is "the only immediate" and thus "most *adequate* possible *objectivization* of will" (WWR I, 174). In order to distinguish between the very different meanings of being an object in both cases, Schopenhauer introduces the term "objectivization (*Objektität*)." The Idea as objectivization of will marks the moment in the process of objectivation of will where it becomes accessible to cognition but has not yet entered into the state where the inevitable subjective conditions of cognition distort the perception of things. The artist who cognizes the Idea in the individual thing "so to speak *understands nature's half spoken words*. He expresses clearly what she merely stammers. He impresses on hard marble the beauty of the form which nature failed to achieve in a thousand attempts, and he places it before her, exclaiming as it were, 'This is what you wanted to say!'" (WWR I, 222).

Mostly Schopenhauer gives such metaphorical descriptions of the Idea.[7] This is consistent with the distinction he makes between the cognition of Idea and the cognition under the principle of reason. Nevertheless, both are bound by the continuity of the process of objectivation. Therefore the attempt to approach the Idea from the ordinary cognition is possible, and indeed that attempt characterizes philosophy which has to start from common experience and is tied to ordinary reason (cf. WWR I, 271ff.; Malter 1991, 39ff.). In the explanatory additions to the third book, laid down in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer provides an explanation of the transition from ordinary perception to the perception of Idea which will be analysed in the following section. The result is that

> an *Idea* apprehended in such a way is of course not yet the essence of the thing-in-itself, precisely because it has proceeded from the cognition of mere relations. Nevertheless, as the result of the sum of all relations, it is the real *character* of the thing, and therefore the complete expression of the essence displaying itself to perception as object, apprehended not in reference to an individual will, but as it expresses itself of itself, whereby indeed it determines all its relations, which were only cognized until then.
>
> (WWR II, 364; see Kossler 2002)

The Idea is here seen in parallel to character which is originally the object of self-consciousness and with the development of the metaphysics of will had been extended to all objectivizations of will.[8] The point of self-knowledge is the act of will through which the essence, the "will" comes to light. This process of objectivation of the essence that we subjectively experience in voluntary acting is perceived objectively in the Idea of a thing. Just like we define our relation to the world by acting according to our character the thing is viewed as that which defines its relations spontaneously. Thus, in aesthetic contemplation self-knowledge is unified with the liberation from the service of will, for the only way to perceive things not in relation to the own interest is to contemplate them as creating their relations to other things and to the perceiver by themselves. Having analysed the form of cognition and the object of aesthetic contemplation we now turn to the question: who is able to cognize the Idea and what are the conditions for that cognition on the part of the subject?

2. The Artist as Pure Subject of Cognition

The main quality of the pure subject of cognition is the fact that it has withdrawn from the service of will. This is expressed by Schopenhauer in writing that the cognition is "will-less" or that will is "silent" (WWR I, 218ff.). Going by what we learned about the corporeality of the subject in Schopenhauer, it is clear that the subject as a whole cannot be will-less, instead will-lessness signifies a state of it. That during the state of pure cognition the subject in principle remains tied to body and will becomes manifest in the fact that it is able to maintain this state only for a short time and then involuntarily falls back to ordinary cognition. Pure cognition is like the flying of a flying fish which is able to stay in the air for a little while but must return to the sea where it belongs naturally. In the artist the paradox[9] occurs that he who is more capable of pure cognition than others is at the same time as a rule a more distinct individual. He is more passionate, more egocentric and he suffers more than others, in short, his will is stronger.

The conflicting character of the artist becomes explicable if we consider the description of the transition from ordinary to pure cognition mentioned at the end of the previous section. In its "normal function" intellect cognizes mere relations, first of all relations of objects to (individual) will. Yet, higher forms of intellect, i.e., human intellect acquainted with the faculty of reason for the purpose of "completeness of this cognition" also perceives relations of things to one another. Perception of this kind already "takes place only *indirectly* in the service of will," and if it gets more and more weight:

> the subjection of the intellect to will at the same time becomes more and more indirect and limited. If the intellect has power enough to gain predominance and to abandon entirely the relations of things to will, in order to apprehend instead of them the purely objective essence of a phenomenon that expresses itself through all relations, then, simultaneously with the service of will, it also forsakes the apprehension of mere relations, and with this also really that of the individual thing as such.
>
> (WWR II, 363)

This explanation of a gradual transition from ordinary to pure cognition does not necessarily contradict the claim that pure cognition occurs suddenly or at one stroke. Even if the service to the will becomes more and more indirect, the moment the intellect tears away cognition entirely from will is not derived from that movement and it signifies a different kind of cognition.

As indicated above, thoughtful awareness of the genius corresponds to pure cognition on the part of the subject. However, thoughtful awareness (*Besonnenheit*) is not only a faculty of genius but also of cognition in the service of will. In regard to the latter it coincides with reason and signifies the effect that it is able to present much more motives and circumstances to will than actually perceivable. While this is obviously a function serving will by multiplying and increasing desire and fear and therewith individuality, it has a side-effect which contradicts the service of will. For the presentation of abstract motives includes a hampering of the effect of motives presented by immediate actual perception, a quieting of an act of will for the time of consideration. This side-effect which originally occurs "for the purpose of the completion" of cognition in service of will opens the way to quieting will at all. Thoughtful awareness thus in its

highest grade leads to pure objective cognition and "enables the painter to reproduce faithfully on canvas the nature he has before his eyes, and the poet accurately to call up again by means of abstract concepts the perceptual present by expressing it and thus bringing it to distinct consciousness" (WWR II, 382).

> The animal lives without any thoughtful awareness. It has consciousness, i.e., it knows itself and its weal and woe, and in addition the objects that occasion these. Its cognition, however, always remains subjective; it never becomes objective. Everything occurring therein seems to the animal to be a matter of course, and can therefore never become for it a theme (object of description) or a problem (object of meditation). Its consciousness is therefore entirely *immanent*. The consciousness of ordinary breed of people is certainly not of the same kind, but yet is of a kindred nature, since his perception of things and of the world is also mainly subjective, and remains predominantly immanent. It perceives things in the world, but not the world; its own actions and sufferings, but not itself. Now as the distinctness of consciousness is enhanced in infinite gradations, thoughtful awareness takes place more and more; in this way it gradually comes about that occasionally, though rarely and again with extremely different degrees of distinctness, the question passes through the mind like a flash: "What is all this?" or "*How* is it really constituted?" If the first question attains to great distinctness and is continuously present, it will make the philosopher; and just in the same way the other question will make the artist or poet.
>
> (WWR II, 382)[10]

Up to the moment when the relation of things to the will are cut off entirely, thoughtful awareness remains in the service of the will with the effect of increasing individuality and passion. This is why artists often are over-excited, passionate, even immoral in their daily life (cf. WWR II, 384; 388ff.),[11] while at the same time calmly, carefully and selfless working on their creation. The fact that thoughtful awareness includes both effects makes the paradox of the suffering genius comprehensible.

However, if genius is explained merely by increasing thoughtful awareness this may be satisfactory in regard to the contemplation of Idea but it is difficult to describe the act of producing works of art. Thoughtful awareness is a faculty that belongs to every human being since man is defined by reason. The capacity for becoming pure subject of cognition therefore must "be inherent to a lesser and different degree in all human beings, for otherwise they would be as little capable of enjoying works of art as producing them" (WWR I, 194). And in fact, most people are capable of enjoying works of art and consequently of becoming pure subject of cognition for a while. One could say that nearly every human being is or has a genius to a certain degree.[12] But this is not the sense in which Schopenhauer uses the term. In contrast, genius is confronted with "ordinary man, that factory-work of nature which it daily produces by the thousands" (WWR I, 187) as its opposite. The artist is provided with even a higher degree of thoughtful awareness as is necessary for will-less contemplation. It "enables him to maintain with it the thoughtful awareness required for repeating the thus known in a voluntary and intentional work, such repetition being the work of art" (WWR I, 195).

On this view of the creation of a work of art, the artist is capable of keeping the Idea in mind while he changes from pure cognition to cognition under the principle of reason in order to produce the work "voluntarily and intentionally." In the *Parerga and Paralipomena* Schopenhauer writes very clearly

> that the original artistic cognition is one that is entirely separate from, and independent of, the will, a will-free, will-less cognition . . . On the other hand, with the *execution* of the work, where the purpose is to communicate and present what is known, the *will* can, indeed must, again be active, just because there exists a *purpose*. Accordingly, the principle of sufficient reason here rules once more.
>
> (PP II, 418)

If the artist is characterized by the capability to "communicate to others the Idea he has grasped" (WWR I, 195), thoughtful awareness seems to be a means for an end; and indeed Schopenhauer writes that the work of art "is merely a means of facilitating the cognition" of Idea (WWR I, 195). Now, it is hard to understand as to how the same faculty that in a very high degree leads to liberation of cognition from the service of will in an even higher degree should become a means for voluntary action.

Another faculty therefore must be required in addition to thoughtful awareness in order to explain the production of a work of art. This is "imagination (*Phantasie*)" (WWR I, 186). The genius has need of imagination "to see in things not what nature has actually formed but what it had striven to form but failed to bring to pass" (WWR I, 186). With this capability of imagination we are turning back to the Idea. According to our interpretation it refers to the process of objectivation in such a way that a thing is apprehended as bringing forth its relations to other things by itself independent of influences from outside.[13] Since the Idea thus is no object in an ordinary sense but rather the process of becoming such an object, or, in short, objectivization of the essence, the artist cannot communicate the Idea simply by replicating it in the work of art. Or, in other words, what the artist produces voluntarily in time, space and matter cannot be an actual reproduction of the Idea. Instead works of art are able to call forth aesthetic contemplation in us or to get the Idea to come to us more easily. The artist "lets us look into the world through his eyes" (WWR I, 195), so that we may see the beautiful "*prior to experience*" (WWR I, 221). Communication of the Idea is made possible by the artist through the "Ideal" which is "the Idea in so far as it is cognized at least halfway *a priori* and, in that it comes as such to meet and fill out what is given by nature *a posteriori*, becomes practical in art" (WWR I, 222). The faculty which enables the artist to show beauty "as he has never seen it, and surpasses nature in his depiction" (WWR I, 222), i.e., to model the Ideal is, as we have seen, imagination. Thus it is not thoughtful awareness that distinguishes the artist but imagination. Certainly this must be a special kind of imagination which as imagination "with genius" is set apart from common imagination in service of will (WWR I, 187). Schopenhauer did not elaborate the special kind of imagination of the artist, maybe because this would have put him too close to Schelling and German Romanticism. Be that as it may, the conception of the artist as pure subject of cognition is exceeded by the fact that the distinguishing quality of the artist is not the ability for attaining pure cognition (this is what he shares with common man even if he has the ability in a higher degree) but imagination that enables him to communicate pure cognition.

Imagination of the artist as a means for communicating the Idea points out to the realm of ethics where the systematic thought continues. The end for which the artist produces works of art is not at all related to his individual will. Communication of Ideas does not serve one's own will but will in others to become self-conscious. This is what it shares with ethics, namely compassion, even if the artist has not to be moral since

by aesthetic contemplation as pure cognition he is not aware of will as the unified essence of all beings. From aesthetic contemplation one has to go on to ethics, for pure cognition attains objectivity merely by ignoring the aspect of subjectivity. "But is the world, then, a peep-show (*Guckkasten*)? These things are certainly beautiful to *behold*, but to *be* them is something quite different" (WWR II, 581).

See also 2 Perception and Understanding: Schopenhauer, Reid and Kant; 9 Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas; 16 Schopenhauer on the Metaphysics of Art and Morality.

Notes

1 References are to the following English editions: WWR = *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. by E.F.J. Payne, 2 vols., New York: Dover Publications, 1969; FR = *On The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, trans. by E.F.J. Payne, La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1974; EFR = *Schopenhauer's Early Fourfold Root*, trans. by F.C. White, Aldershot: Avebury, 1997; PP = *Parerga and Paralipomena. Short Philosophical Essays*, trans. by E.F.J. Payne, 2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press 1974; *WN* = *On the Will in Nature*, trans. by E.F.J. Payne, New York: Berg, 1992; *MR* = *Manuscript Remains in Four Volumes*, trans. by E.F.J. Payne, New York: Berg, 1988. I have also used the following edition of the main work: *The World as Will and Presentation*, trans. by R. Aquila and D. Carus, 2 vols., New York: Pearson Education, 2008. I have modified the translations where it seemed appropriate.

2 For the principle of individuation, see WWR I, 112ff. and Kossler (1999, 213–306).

3 Here Schopenhauer is not talking of identity but *coincidence*. Nevertheless he maintained the word "inexplicable" in the second edition of *On the Fourfold Root* and just cancelled the addition "absolutely." This may allude to the fact that philosophical cognition has an extraordinary status.

4 The term "will," as that which is realized "indirectly" by the act of will, is only a *denominatio a potiori* (WWR I, 111).

5 See the quotations at the beginning of the chapter. Cf. Atwell (1996, 82ff.).

6 Schopenhauer may have been inspired by Friedrich Wilhelm J. Schelling who refers in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) to art as the highest point of his philosophy since it offers the objective proof for "intellectual intuition." Art thereby alone gives general validity to philosophical knowledge.

7 This is perhaps one of the reasons why commentators often think the aesthetics to be an alien element in Schopenhauer's philosophy. See Janaway (1996, 41).

8 See Note 4 above.

9 See Atwell (1996, 92) who calls this "the paradox of suffering genius"; see also Jacquette (1996, 10 ff.).

10 Of course, the question that will make the artist is not to be understood as the question about the function of a thing, which belongs to knowledge under the principle of reason. Instead it is the question as to how will objectifies itself in a thing. See also WWR I, 222, where Schopenhauer writes that knowledge of the artist concerns "the *what* of the appearance instead of the *how*."

11 For the proximity of genius and madness in this context, see WWR I, 190ff.

12 In early aesthetics the word "genius" had maintained from its origin in the Latin word "ingenium" also the meaning of wit as a common faculty of man.

13 Such a definition of the Idea has a long tradition in speculative philosophy. Spinoza for example defines the "adequate idea" as that which has all properties or intrinsic features of an idea insofar as it is considered without relation to the object (Ethica II, expl.).

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14

Schopenhauer on Tragedy and the Sublime

ALEX NEILL

At its best, Schopenhauer suggests, tragic drama:

> shows us the greatest misfortune not as an exception, not as something brought about by rare circumstances or by monstrous characters, but as something that arises easily and spontaneously out of the actions and characters of men, as something almost essential to them, and in this way it is brought terribly near to us. . . . [It] shows us those powers that destroy happiness and life, and in such a way that the path to them is at any moment open *even to us*. We see the greatest suffering brought about by entanglements whose essence could be assumed even *by our own fate*, and by actions that perhaps *even we* might be capable of committing . . . *Then, shuddering, we feel ourselves already in the midst of hell*.
>
> (WWR I, 254–55; emphasis mine)

On the one hand, of course, this passage appears to invoke one or another version of the so-called "paradox of tragedy": if *this* is what the experience of tragedy is like, how can we take pleasure in that experience or in the kind of work which provides it? But the passage also prompts a more fundamental question concerning the coherence of Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory. For as he describes it here, the experience of (at least some varieties of) tragedy appears to be of a kind in which the spectators understand what is depicted in the work in relation to their own lives – in relation to what, in Aristotle's terms, "would be likely to happen," "could happen" or "ought to have happened" (*Poetics* 51b, 27–32) to *them*, as individuals – and as a result they respond to it viscerally, with emotion. This is puzzling, for as Schopenhauer has characterized it earlier, aesthetic experience depends on "abolishing individuality in the knowing subject" (WWR I, 169); it is a variety of experience in which "we *lose* ourselves entirely" in the object of the experience: "in other words, we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist only as pure subject" (WWR I, 178). The pleasure of aesthetic contemplation has its source precisely in "the self-consciousness of the knower . . . as *pure, will-less subject of knowledge*" (WWR I, 195–96): once we have "given ourselves up to

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pure, will-less knowing, we have stepped into another world, so to speak, where everything that moves our will, and thus violently agitates us, no longer exists" (WWR I, 197). In short, Schopenhauer emphasizes time and time again that the hallmark of aesthetic experience is its "will-lessness"; this is his distinctive take on the familiar thought that aesthetic experience is defined in terms of its "disinterestedness." As he characterizes the experience of tragedy, however, it is a kind of experience in which the individual will appears to be very much involved, a kind of experience that appears to be positively will-*full*. How then can the experience of tragedy constitute genuinely aesthetic experience?

This tension in Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory is not generated solely by his characterization of our experience of tragedy; it arises at a more fundamental level from his appeal to the sublime as a category of aesthetic experience. For the sublime – which in the century or so before Schopenhauer started thinking about these matters had emerged as a fully fledged category of aesthetic experience – was (and indeed is) standardly understood as a variety of experience in which pleasure is alloyed with one or another kind of uneasiness, in which the object of experience is perceived as in some sense disturbing or threatening or challenging. The feeling of the sublime is "an agreeable kind of horror" (Joseph Addison), or an "enthusiastic terror" (John Dennis); "its strongest emotion is an emotion of distress" (Edmund Burke). On the face of it, then, it is not surprising that when he revisits the topic in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer suggests that the experience of tragedy, experience in which "shuddering, we feel ourselves already in the midst of hell," represents "the highest degree" of the feeling of the sublime (WWR II, 433). But horror, terror, distress – indeed, all such forms of uneasiness – are in Schopenhauerian terms modifications or affections of the individual will (see, e.g., WWR II, 202). And if this sort of feeling is at the heart of experience of the sublime, how can Schopenhauer coherently regard the latter as a category of genuinely aesthetic – which is to say, supposedly, will-*less* – experience?

One might try to answer this question by appeal to the distinction between the sublime and the beautiful; perhaps, by suggesting that will-lessness is not a condition of aesthetic experience *per se*, but specifically of the experience of the beautiful. But although – as we shall see – there is something to this thought, it will not help as it stands. It is true that in the passages where Schopenhauer is most explicit (and indeed at his most lyrical) in his insistence on the will-lessness of aesthetic experience, he for the most part has experience of the beautiful in mind. But as he construes it, aesthetic experience (other than that of music) is by definition experience of the Ideas, and will-lessness, he argues, is a condition of all such experience. It is, then, a condition of aesthetic experience in general – of the sublime, as well as the beautiful.[1]

How does Schopenhauer distinguish between the beautiful and the sublime, then? As he construes it, the readiness with which the transition from (normal, everyday) will-driven cognition to (disinterested, aesthetic) will-less contemplation comes about in a subject on a given occasion will depend in part on how pressing the demands of the subject's will are on that occasion; and this, he suggests, will in turn depend in part on the nature of the object(s) of perception on that occasion. Beautiful objects, Schopenhauer holds, are those that "accommodate" the transition into the state of will-lessness in a perceiver; such objects "easily become representatives of their Ideas"

(WWR I, 200) inasmuch as the perception of them does not provoke activity of will. Sublime objects or states of affairs, by contrast, stand in "a hostile relation to the human will in general, as manifested in . . . the human body. They may be opposed to it, they may threaten it by their might that eliminates all resistance, or their immeasurable greatness may reduce it to nought" (WWR I, 201). Sublime objects and states of affairs, that is, are recognized by the subject as threatening, in some sense, and that recognition is an impediment to transition into will-less contemplation of them. Despite this, Schopenhauer insists, such contemplation of the sublime is possible:

> Nevertheless, the beholder may not direct his attention to this relation to his will which is so pressing and hostile, but, although he perceives it and acknowledges it, he may consciously turn away from it, forcibly tear himself from his will and its relations, and, giving himself up entirely to knowledge, may quietly contemplate, as pure, will-less subject of knowing, those very objects so terrible to the will. He may comprehend only their Idea that is foreign to all relation, gladly linger over its contemplation, and consequently be elevated precisely in this way above himself, his person, his willing, and all willing. In that case, he is then filled with the feeling of the sublime; he is in that state of exaltation, and therefore the object that causes such a state is called *sublime*.
>
> (WWR I, 201–202)

The thought that an experience of the sublime depends on the subject's ability to "forcibly tear himself from his will and its relations" should give us pause here. For the thought appears to be that in the face of sublimity, the transition into the state of willlessness, into aesthetic experience, is the effect of an act of will. And elsewhere Schopenhauer explicitly denies the possibility of any such thing: "The change in the subject" that aesthetic experience, the apprehension of the Ideas, depends on, "just because it consists in the elimination of all willing, cannot proceed from the will, and hence cannot be an arbitrary act of will, in other words, cannot rest with us" (WWR II, 367). The implication of these remarks is that the occurrence of aesthetic experience – and that is aesthetic experience *per se* – is something that we are passive to, something that happens *to* us, rather than something that we bring about. And isn't the suggestion that experience of the sublime comes about as the result of "a conscious and violent tearing away from the relations of the same object to the will which are recognised as unfavourable" (WWR I, 202) simply inconsistent with this?

I think not. It is true that the way in which Schopenhauer states the difference between experience of the beautiful and experience of the sublime tends to encourage the thought that while the former is something that happens to us, the latter is something that we bring about: again, in the experience of beauty, as he says, it is the "quality of [the object] which facilitates knowledge of its Idea" that ("imperceptibly") "raises us to the will-free subject of knowing," while "with the sublime, that state of pure knowing is obtained first of all by a conscious and violent tearing away" (WWR I, 201–202). But the phrase "*first of all*" is crucial here: in fact the activity – the "violent tearing" – that Schopenhauer insists is essential to aesthetic experience of the sublime is essential not as the efficient cause of that variety of experience, but rather as a condition of its possibility; not because it brings the experience about, but because it makes it possible for the experience to *happen to* the subject. Schopenhauer's thought, I suggest, is that in the experience of the sublime, just as in the experience of the beautiful, it is

that quality of the object "which facilitates knowledge of its Idea" that effects the transition – that so to speak "pulls" the observer – into will-lessness. In the case of beauty, this transition occurs easily, since beautiful objects (as Schopenhauer in effect stipulates) do not provoke or arouse desire or emotion. Sublime objects, however, are perceived as in one way or another at least potentially a threat to the individual will; as such they are so to speak natural aggravators of desire and emotion, and these responses have to be in one way or another repressed or subdued if a transition to will-lessness is to be possible. That is, the subject must deliberately – by an act of will – in some sense disregard the perceived (if only as potential) threat. To describe this in terms of the subject's "forcibly tear[ing] himself from his will," as Schopenhauer does at one point, is misleading, for disregarding the threatening aspect of the object cannot in itself produce will-lessness. (Consider: a fire-fighter who disregards the immediate threat to his own life and limb, in order to be able to function effectively in attempting to rescue the occupants of a building on fire, does not – or at any rate, clearly does not *thereby* – move into a condition of will-lessness; indeed, were he to do so, it seems likely that the act of disregarding the threat would turn out to have been self-defeating.) But some of Schopenhauer's other ways of characterizing the activity of the subject in this sort of context are less misleading: for example, "the beholder may not direct his attention to *this relation to his will* which is so pressing and hostile, but, although he perceives it and acknowledges it, he may consciously turn away from it" (WWR I, 201) – that is, "turn away" from *that relation*. Again, "with the sublime, [will-lessness] is obtained first of all by a conscious and violent tearing away from *the relations of the same object to the will* which are recognised as unfavourable" (WWR I, 202, my emphasis) – not a tearing away from the will itself, that is, but from concentration on the hostile relation that the object has to the will.

I suggest, then, that Schopenhauer's thought is that aesthetic experience of the sublime is attained via a two-stage process, involving (first) an active disregarding of the threat posed by the object in question, which makes possible, though it does not in itself induce, (second) a passive transition into will-lessness.

It may be tempting to see in this analysis an attempt to render consistent the uneasiness that has traditionally been taken to be characteristic of the sublime with the will-lessness that Schopenhauer takes to be essential to aesthetic experience; to render them consistent, in effect, by separating them. For, in a way consistent with this analysis, uneasiness may be construed as involved only in the first stage of the process: either (or both) in the sense of being (at least potentially) threatened itself, or in the mental struggle involved in the "conscious and violent tearing away" of the subject's focus on that sense. In either case, uneasiness may be construed as – unproblematically – a stage on the way to will-lessness, rather than as – paradoxically – a component of it. And some of what Schopenhauer has to say about the sublime lends itself to interpretation along just such lines. For example, in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, he counters what he (mistakenly) suggests is Aristotle's claim that the stimulation of fear and sympathy is "the ultimate aim of tragedy" by arguing that the latter, uneasy, responses (they "certainly do not in themselves belong to the agreeable sensations") "*cannot be the end, but only the means*" (WWR II, 435; my emphasis). The end of tragedy, he suggests, is to issue to the spectator "the summons to turn away the will from life," by making him "aware . . . that it is better to turn his heart

away from life"; and the spectator's response to this recognition, Schopenhauer suggests, is "an exalted" – and by implication will-less – "pleasure" (WWR II, 435). The will-full and uneasy responses of pity and fear experienced by the spectator, we may take Schopenhauer to be suggesting, are a means to – in some way a stage on the way to, and hence separate from – the will-less pleasure that he experiences; and it is in the latter that the experience of the sublime essentially consists.

It would be unfortunate if this – call it the "separation hypothesis" – were Schopenhauer's real position, however. For one thing, the picture of our experience of tragedy that it presents is implausible: in any experience of a serious work of tragedy that is adequate to the work, uneasiness (and here even more than earlier it should be apparent that I am using the term very much as shorthand) is surely at the heart of that experience – essential to it in more than a merely causal sense. A more general problem, however, is that the separation hypothesis misrepresents the idea of (experience of) the sublime. For it renders the distinction between the sublime and the beautiful entirely aetiological, entirely a matter of the means or route by which "pure will-less knowing, and . . . the knowledge, which necessarily appears therewith, of the Ideas" comes about. At points Schopenhauer does write as though this is what he has in mind; for example:

> Thus what distinguishes the feeling of the sublime from that of the beautiful is that, with the beautiful, pure knowledge has gained the upper hand without a struggle . . . On the other hand, with the sublime, that state of pure knowing is obtained first of all by a conscious and violent tearing away.
>
> (WWR I, 202)

Taken at face value, the distinction Schopenhauer is making here is indeed wholly aetiological; the feeling itself – the feeling of the feeling, so to speak – of the sublime is, as he presents it here, essentially no different from the feeling of the beautiful. But if this were his real position – and this is a reason not to be too quick to assume that it is – he would simply have side-stepped the intuition that motivates much if not all philosophical concern with the sublime, the intuition that aesthetic experience is not fundamentally unitary in character, and that there is a variety (perhaps more than one variety) of aesthetic experience that is distinctive in virtue of being essentially colored, as opposed to simply preceded, by uneasiness.

Again, however, the question is how if at all that intuition can be squared with Schopenhauer's insistence on the fundamental will-lessness of aesthetic experience. The worry here can be expressed as what looks like a *reductio*: from the premises (i) aesthetic experience is fundamentally will-less, (ii) the sublime is a category of aesthetic experience, (iii) experience of the sublime essentially involves uneasiness, and (iv) feelings of uneasiness are in one way or another affectations of the will, we can derive the apparently absurd conclusion (v) that the state of will-lessness may involve affectations of the will. At least one of the premises has to go, it would seem. But it is not clear that any of them can be rejected without doing considerable damage to either or both the plausibility and the consistency of Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory.

Having said that, however, is it so clear that the conclusion of our supposed *reductio* – the conclusion that a state of will-lessness may involve affectations of the will – is

indeed absurd? Schopenhauer emphasizes, after all, that intuitive knowledge of the Ideas, which is what is given in aesthetic experience, is given through sensation: as he says at one point, "knowledge of the Idea is necessarily knowledge through perception" (WWR I, 186). That is to say, as Schopenhauer construes it, aesthetic experience is essentially *embodied* experience. (How this is supposed to apply to the experience of literature is an interesting question, but it is Schopenhauer's position.) And given that an individual's body is nothing other than the objectification of his will, and that sensation involves modification or "stimulation" of the body, surely it follows that will-less cognition of the Ideas must not only be consistent with, but actually depends on, modification of the will.

What then can Schopenhauer mean by "will-lessness"? What can "will-less knowing" (WWR I, 197) amount to, given that it cannot literally depend on the absence of will, or on the will's being unmoved or unaffected? The answer can only be that will-less knowing is a kind of cognition in which intellect is not operating *in the service of* the will.[2] Aesthetic experience involves not so much will-*less* cognition, that is, as cognition that is not so to speak *driven* by the demands of the individual's will – not driven, that is to say, by desire and emotion. Schopenhauer's tendency to describe this variety of experience in terms of will-lessness may be explicable in terms of the fact that his main concern is with the experience of beauty; experience in which (because of the nature of the kinds of object in question) the subject is not *conscious* of himself as a phenomenon of will; experience in which the will has been "forgotten," and "the self-consciousness of the knower" is of a "*pure, will-less subject of knowledge*" (WWR I, 178, 195–96). But lack of consciousness of one's will does not entail the absence of will or of willing (indeed, it is not clear that the latter constitutes a coherent possibility for animal life). And more importantly for our purposes here, it is far from clear that lack of consciousness of the individual will – which is to say, of desires and emotions – is a necessary concomitant of cognitive experience that is not driven by the individual will. Nothing that Schopenhauer says rules out the possibility that non-will-driven experience may be experience in which one is aware of one's will and for that matter of acts of willing – indeed, if my argument here and in what follows is correct, what he says about our experience of the sublime in fact rules this possibility *in*. All that his general conception of aesthetic experience rules out in this regard is that in such experience one's cognition or intellect could be driven by, or functioning in the service of, one's will.

This may seem too quick. Given Schopenhauer's account of intellect as a faculty whose natural function is entirely that of serving the will, it may be suggested that in his terms, so long as one is aware of oneself as a willing subject, the will must just in virtue of that fact be in control of the intellect; which implies that only where a subject is not conscious of himself as a subject of will – as in the experience of the beautiful – is will-less (in the sense just characterized) or aesthetic experience possible. But there are a number of reasons to resist this suggestion. First, although it is true that Schopenhauer insists that intellect is essentially a tool in the service of the will, it is very far from obvious that this commits him to the view that awareness of oneself as a phenomenon of will entails that the intellect must be operating in the service of the individual will. Second, as we have already seen, the suggestion leaves Schopenhauer unable to make sense of the idea of aesthetic experience being in any sense uneasy, and hence

with no satisfactory account of the sublime; and it implies either that his account of the character of our experience of tragedy is simply inconsistent with his general aesthetic theory, or that in his view our experience of tragic drama is not genuinely aesthetic experience – either of which, if true, would be to say the least worrying. Finally, it puts Schopenhauer at odds with what seems simply to be a fact about human experience: namely, that one can be aware of one's own desires and emotions without acting on the motives that they represent. None of these reasons, or indeed any combination of them, amounts to a knock-down argument for the claim that Schopenhauer's view is that will-less knowing, aesthetic experience, may be experience in which one is aware of oneself as a willing being. But they are, I suggest, good reasons to maintain that this is the case in the absence of compelling reasons to think otherwise.

However, even if it is true that, as Schopenhauer understands it, will-less aesthetic experience may be continuous with awareness of oneself as a willing being, does this establish that there is conceptual room in his aesthetic theory for aesthetic experience that is *uneasy?*

It is clear that some species – indeed, the main species – of uneasiness are not compatible with will-lessness in the sense characterized above. As Schopenhauer says:

> [If] a single individual willing, such as fear or desire . . . were to enter consciousness through actual personal affliction or danger from the object, the individual will, thus actually affected, would at once gain the upper hand. The peace of contemplation would become impossible, the impression of the sublime would be lost.
>
> (WWR I, 202)

However, the uneasiness of passion or emotion and (unsatisfied) desire, while it may be the most prevalent variety of uneasiness, is not the only variety. Schopenhauer emphasizes at a number of points that experience of the sublime involves *exaltation*. At times, indeed, he writes in a way that suggests that he takes this to be the distinguishing mark of the sublime. For example:

> The beholder may not direct his attention to this relation [of the object] to his will which is so pressing and hostile, but . . . may comprehend only [its] Idea that is foreign to all relation, gladly linger over its contemplation, and consequently be elevated precisely in this way above himself, his person, his willing, and all willing. In that case, he is then filled with the feeling of the *sublime*; he is in the state of exaltation, and therefore the object that causes such a state is called *sublime*.
>
> (WWR I, 201–202)

This is somewhat misleading: if exaltation (*Erhebung*) is understood as the *state* in which a person is "above himself, his person, his willing," then it is as central to the experience of beauty as it is of the sublime; that is to say, it is the distinguishing mark of aesthetic experience in general, rather than of experience of the sublime in particular. A few lines later, however, Schopenhauer suggests that it is not so much the state of exaltation that he is concerned with here, as the means by which that state is brought about:

> With the sublime, that state of pure knowing is obtained first of all by a conscious and violent tearing away from the relations of the . . . object to the will which are recognised as unfavourable, by a free exaltation (*erheben*), accompanied by consciousness, beyond the will and the knowledge related to it.
>
> (WWR I, 202)

We saw earlier how the "free elevation" that Schopenhauer refers to here may be construed as involving a struggle, and hence uneasiness of one kind or another. We also saw that such uneasiness, whether it be construed as lying in the recognition of the object as hostile to the will, or in the effort required for "conscious and violent tearing away" from that recognition, is by hypothesis something that occurs as a stage on the way to will-lessness – part of what one is "elevated above" in will-less experience, rather than an element of that experience – and as such cannot be appealed to in attempting to characterize and explain the uneasy character of sublime experience itself. But Schopenhauer goes on to maintain that in experience of the sublime, in contrast with the experience of beauty:

> exaltation must not only be won with consciousness, but also be maintained, and it is therefore accompanied by a constant recollection of the will, yet not of a single individual willing, such as fear or desire, but of human willing in general, in so far as it is expressed universally through its objectivity, the human body.
>
> (WWR I, 202)

This sentence is both suggestive and puzzling. On the one hand, it hints – in the references to maintenance and "a constant recollection of the will" – at potential sources of uneasiness that may be a feature of will-lessness itself, rather than merely something to be overcome in the achievement of the latter. On the other hand, it is very far from obvious why Schopenhauer regards exaltation (or elevation) as needing to be maintained in experience of the sublime, why and in what sense "it is *therefore* accompanied by a constant recollection of will," and what a "recollection of . . . human willing in general" might amount to.

Schopenhauer's own discussion of the matter is so sketchy that it is difficult to settle these questions decisively. But the reading of his position that makes most sense of what he does say, I think, is as follows: when an object or situation is perceived as (even if only potentially) hostile or threatening, the possibility of experiencing it aesthetically depends on the subject's deliberately ("freely," "consciously") disregarding any threat that it may appear to pose *to him*. But this does not entail that the subject stops perceiving the object of perception as by nature threatening; by hypothesis, it *is* threatening, and a subject who loses sight of that fact would therefore not be seeing the object for what it really is – in Schopenhauerian terms, would not be perceiving its Idea, and hence would not be experiencing it aesthetically at all. In short, then, the subject of aesthetic experience of the sublime has to recognize the object of his perception as threatening without experiencing it as a threat *to him*. And this is what Schopenhauer is getting at when he says that experience of the sublime involves "a constant recollection of . . . human willing in general": the subject recognizes the object, or the kind of thing that the object represents, as in some sense "opposed to" human willing as a

species, or to activity of Will as it manifests itself in human beings "in general," but does not focus on the object's relation to him as an individual.

However, given that the natural function of intellect is to further the ends of the individual will, so that the (as it were) default operating mode of intellect is in service of that will, the fact that a subject recognizes the object as threatening even in this general sense means that there will be a continuing pull towards the apprehension of that object as an individual, in terms of its hostile relation to the individual subject; a tendency to slide from apprehending it as "a threatening kind of thing" to seeing it as a threat to oneself. Sublime experience, that is, is in an important respect essentially unstable. (In this respect, sublime experience, as I take Schopenhauer to construe it, is somewhat analogous to the visual experience of an apparently three-dimensional image in the two-dimensional patterns of an autostereogram, or "Magic Eye" picture: in such cases, coming to have the visual experience requires some effort, and once one does have it, the experience typically feels – and indeed is – unstable and liable to slip out of one's grasp.)

This then is the sense in which will-less experience of the sublime requires "maintenance"; more precisely, this kind of experience depends on the subject's maintaining focus on the relations of the Idea instantiated by the object in question to "human willing in general," without sliding back into perception of it as an individual thing that is potentially or actually threatening to the individual subject. Hence Schopenhauer's suggestion is that it is *because* the state of exaltation needs to be maintained that it is ("therefore") accompanied by "a constant recollection . . . of human willing in general." Without a focus on the latter, aesthetic experience of the sublime will be impossible: will-less cognition, if it has been attained at all, will simply collapse back into fear.

What room is there in this picture for the possibility of uneasiness in will-less cognition? It may be suggested that the recognition of a sublime object as in some sense threatening or hostile to "human willing in general" is itself uneasy or disturbing. However, leaving Schopenhauer and aesthetic theory aside for a moment, it is clear that I can perceive a threat with equanimity (particularly if it is one that I am used to dealing with, and/or that I do not take to be very direct). The perception of something as a threat, that is, need not in itself generate or involve uneasiness; in many if not all cases, something other than the perception of threat is needed for the latter – at a minimum, perhaps, a desire not to be threatened in the manner in question. But in the case of will-less experience of the sublime, of course, no such desire could be operative. The suggestion, then, would have to be that the apprehension of an object as hostile to human willing in general is, all by itself, uneasy. And it is not obvious, to say the least, how that thought might plausibly be fleshed out.

If the reading of Schopenhauer's position that I have offered above is correct, however, we can see how a revised version of this thought may be developed. For the more keenly an object (or its Idea) is perceived as hostile to human willing in general, the stronger the tendency will be for will-less experience of it to collapse into will-driven experience; that is, the more precarious and unstable will-less (sublime) experience of it will be, and – crucially – will feel. And I suggest that it is in the feeling of precariousness and instability that attends the experience of the sublime – in the feeling of the fact that will-less experience of this variety is constantly under threat of collapsing into

ordinary will-driven cognition – that uneasiness is most plausibly, in Schopenhauerian terms, to be understood as residing.

Clearly this feeling of precariousness or instability will come in varying degrees of intensity, depending on the degree to which the object in question is seen as a threat to human willing in general. And recognition of this fact makes possible a much more perspicuous understanding than Schopenhauer himself offers of his insightful suggestion that experience of the sublime is not an all or nothing affair, but comes in varying degrees of intensity. Schopenhauer himself makes the point as follows:

> The feeling of the sublime is distinguished from that of the beautiful only by the addition, namely the exaltation beyond the known hostile relation of the contemplated object to the will in general. Thus there result several degrees of the sublime . . . according as *this addition* is strong, clamorous, urgent, and near, or only feeble, remote, and merely suggested. (WWR I, 202; emphasis mine)

As it stands, this is more than a little misleading. As we have seen, the exaltation in question is not "beyond the known hostile relation of the contemplated object to the will in general" but rather "beyond" the hostile relation of the object to *my* – to the subject of experience's – will in particular. More importantly, however, the suggestion that the intensity of the sublime experience depends on whether the *exaltation* is "strong, clamorous" etc. or merely "feeble, remote, and merely suggested" simply makes no sense. There is more sense in the thought that the intensity of sublime experience depends simply on the degree to which the hostility of the object to human willing is perceived as "strong" or as "remote"; but, as I noted above, for this suggestion to be plausible as it stands it would have to be shown how it is that the recognition of something as (to some degree) threatening is in itself, without the operative effect of any desires, bound to be experienced as (to some degree) uneasy. Far more plausible – and this, I suggest, is the most charitable way of understanding what Schopenhauer says on the matter – is that the intensity of experience of the sublime will depend on the degree of felt instability or precariousness of that experience, in which lies its uneasiness. The more precarious or unstable the experience feels, in short, the more uneasy it is, and hence the more that experience has the character of the sublime rather than the beautiful.

This understanding of Schopenhauer's position is borne out, I suggest, by his characterization of the extremes of sublime experience. Schopenhauer endorses – albeit without detailed discussion – what he describes as Kant's "correct division" between the dynamically and the mathematically sublime. With regard to the most intense experience of the former, "when we have before our eyes the struggle of the agitated forces of nature on a large scale" in an immense waterfall, for example, or a storm at sea, he writes:

> Then in the unmoved beholder of this scene the twofold nature of his consciousness reaches the highest distinctness. Simultaneously, he feels himself as an individual, as the feeble phenomenon of will, which the slightest touch of these forces can annihilate, helpless against powerful nature, dependent, abandoned to chance, a vanishing nothing in the face of stupendous forces; and he also feels himself as the eternal, serene subject of knowing, who as the condition of every object is the supporter of this whole world, the

> fearful struggle of nature being only his mental picture or representation; he is free from, and foreign to, all willing and all needs, in the quiet comprehension of the Ideas.
>
> (WWR I, 204)

And with regard to the mathematically sublime, confronted with "the infinite greatness of the universe in space and time":

> we feel ourselves reduced to nothing; we feel ourselves as individuals, as living bodies, as transient phenomena of will, like drops in the ocean, dwindling and dissolving into nothing. But against such a ghost of our own nothingness, against such a lying impossibility, there arises the immediate consciousness that all these worlds exist only in our representation, only as modifications of the eternal subject of pure knowing.
>
> (WWR I, 205)

The most extreme experiences of sublimity, that is, are those in which the subject is most aware of himself as an individual, as subject of will. This suggests that these experiences of will-lessness are particularly in danger of collapsing back into will-driven cognition, and hence likely to be felt as especially precarious or unstable – which is to say, particularly colored by uneasiness. And if uneasiness is the distinguishing mark of aesthetic experience of the sublime, that is to say that these experiences of will-lessness are, just as Schopenhauer suggests, particularly intense experiences of the sublime.

We have seen, then, that the idea that the distinguishing mark of experience of the sublime is uneasiness – an idea that, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, Schopenhauer inherited from writers such as Joseph Addison and Edmund Burke, and that is clearly operative in his characterization of the experience of tragedy as representative of "the highest degree" of the feeling of the sublime – is, despite initial appearances, in fact consistent with Schopenhauer's claim that the distinguishing mark of aesthetic experience in general is its will-lessness. And I have argued that the best way to understand the uneasiness of sublime experience in the context of the latter claim is in terms of the felt precariousness or instability of that variety of experience. What then of the experience of tragedy with which we began; experience in which, Schopenhauer suggests, "shuddering, we feel ourselves already in the midst of hell"?

Schopenhauer's suggestion that the experience of tragedy represents "the highest degree" of the feeling of the sublime (WWR II, 433) is best not taken literally. For one thing, his reason for saying this – "just as at the sight of the sublime in nature we turn away from the interest of the will, . . . so in the tragic catastrophe we turn away from the will-to-live itself" (WWR II, 433) – is clearly less than persuasive. For another, what tragedy as a form of art reveals – the Idea of "man in the connected series of his efforts and actions" (WWR I, 244) and "the antagonism of the will with itself" that is "unfolded" in human action (WWR I, 253) – are not in any very straightforward sense things that "have a hostile relation to the human will in general, as manifested in its objectivity, the human body" (WWR I, 201). Indeed, Schopenhauer's claim that sublime objects have a hostile relation to the human *body* (along with the fact that all of his examples of sublime experience refer to phenomena in the natural world, and that not until he gets to tragedy does he refer to the sublime in his discussion of the arts) indi-

cates that he, like most theorists of the sublime, at least before the twentieth century, regarded it as fundamentally a variety of aesthetic experience of the natural world.

More productive, perhaps, is his suggestion that "the effect of the tragedy is *analogous* to that of the dynamically sublime" (WWR II, 433; emphasis mine); although even this more modest claim is given a puzzling twist when Schopenhauer explains the analogy by saying that like the dynamically sublime, tragedy "raises us above the will and its interest, and puts us in such a mood that we find pleasure in the sight of what directly opposes the will" (WWR II, 433). After all, it is not just the dynamically but also the mathematically sublime, and indeed the beautiful, that "raise us above the will and its interest"; and the idea that we take pleasure in the sight of what tragedy shows us raises an all too familiar paradox.

Nonetheless, the experience of tragedy, as Schopenhauer characterizes it, is in at least one respect indeed analogous to the experience of the sublime, as he understands the latter. In both kinds of experience, I take Schopenhauer to be suggesting, the subject's focus is not on himself, as an individual subject of will, but on "human willing in general." When he says that in the experience of tragedy we recognize "that the path to [those powers that destroy happiness and life] is at any moment open even to us" (WWR I, 255), his point, I suggest, is that the spectator recognizes this as a path to which "human willing in general" – human nature as such – is susceptible. And in his suggestion that tragedy shows us that "the greatest suffering" may be brought about "by entanglements whose essence could be assumed even by our own fate, and by actions that perhaps even we might be capable of committing" (WWR I, 255), "our own fate" and "we" refer similarly to human beings as such, rather than to the individual spectator. And this is surely how tragedy is meant to be experienced: if *Lear* shows me, as Gloucester suggests, that "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods / they kill us for their sport," what I learn is not simply something about the fragility of my own well-being, but something about the conditions of being human; and if my response is not to the latter, but rather to a sense of my own vulnerability, that response is simply not adequate to the work. In short, it is a condition of adequacy of a response to such a work that it be focused not on myself as individual subject of will, but on "human willing in general"; which is to say, in Schopenhauerian terms, that an adequate response to a serious work of tragedy will be will-less in just the sense that, as Schopenhauer construes it, experience of the sublime is will-less: the kind of cognition or "way of knowing" that it comprises, though it certainly involves awareness of oneself as subject of will – and hence uneasiness – is not will-*driven*. Like the experience of the sublime, then, this kind of experience of tragedy – the "shuddering" it may involve notwithstanding – is in Schopenhauerian terms a species of genuinely aesthetic experience.

See also 16 Schopenhauer on the Metaphysics of Art and Morality; 20 Schopenhauer on the Inevitability of Unhappiness; 23 Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner.

Notes

1 The term "beauty" has two senses in Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory. The first reflects a traditional understanding of beauty as, roughly, the formal object of aesthetic experience. To

experience something aesthetically is to experience it in such a way that "we recognize in the object not the individual thing, but an Idea" (WWR I, 209). And since everything is such that it can be perceived as an expression of the Idea that it instantiates, he suggests, "everything is also beautiful" (WWR I, 210). In this sense, then, being a potential object of aesthetic experience is a sufficient condition of being beautiful. However, the second sense in which Schopenhauer uses the term "beauty" reflects the thought that aesthetic experience is not solely a matter of the experience of beauty: in this sense of the term, being a potential object of aesthetic experience is merely a necessary, and not a sufficient, condition of being beautiful. Things that are beautiful in this sense, that is, constitute a subset of things that are beautiful in the first sense; "the beautiful" represents one, but not the only, category of (potential objects of) aesthetic experience. The other category – the only other category, in Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory – is "the sublime."

2 As I understand it, Schopenhauer's argument, to summarize it very briefly, is this: given that intuitive knowledge of the Ideas cannot be conditioned by the forms of the principle of sufficient reason, and that only knowledge that *is* conditioned by those forms is available to intellect functioning in the service of an individual will, it follows that an intellect that has intuitive knowledge of the Ideas, though necessarily embodied, could not be functioning in the service of an individual will. For a detailed discussion, see Neill (2008).

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15

Schopenhauer and the Objectivity of Art

BART VANDENABEELE[1]

He who has beheld beauty with his eyes,
Is already in thrall to death.

(August, Graf von Platen-Hallermund)

Although many people would surely agree that art stretches and extends the ways we come to see the world, enhances our understanding and enriches our mental life, few would probably claim that art provides us with *objective* knowledge of the world. Objectivity, we hold, cannot be obtained by creating or admiring novels, sonnets, string quartets and films. Although these will not always simply be expressions of romantic souls, their common purpose is to offer rewarding experiences. And if they do afford us some kind of knowledge or understanding, it will always be mediated by the artist's subjective view of the world. In this, artworks radically differ from scientific theories, which aim to show the true objective nature of things: whereas artists create merely subjective views of the world, scientists (or so common opinion holds) are able to offer theories, laws, hypotheses and solutions to problems that really concern the objective nature of the world, are based on a careful examination of the "facts" and are clearly more objective than the understanding that artworks may provide. It would be hard to convince anyone of the idea that, say, Giorgione's painting *The Tempest* is more objective than Einstein's special theory of relativity.

Yet in Schopenhauer's view, science is a subjectively colored enterprise that merely offers knowledge that is in the service of our human desires, needs and interests. Scientific knowledge, he says, is knowledge that is dependent upon the principle of sufficient reason, i.e., it consists of solutions to problems in terms of causes, grounds and reasons. Scientific knowledge is the most powerful instrument we possess to subjugate the world to our human categories and concepts, and enable us to manipulate nature to a tremendously great extent. In this sense, Schopenhauer claims, science is as subjective as can be, for it is in the service of the human desire to understand and rule the

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world, the need to gain insight into the "deep structure" of reality, in order to help human beings feel more comfortable in nature, to survive in it and ultimately become master of it. Thus, instead of providing disinterested theories, scientists generate solutions that are in the service of the human will to survive in nature and dominate the world.

1. Will-Lessness, Science and Art

On Schopenhauer's view, the artist – and *not* the scientist – provides objective knowledge. Whereas scientists offer us mere subjective (i.e., will-driven) solutions to human problems, artists create works that are the result of *will-less* (i.e., disinterested) perception. Artists, Schopenhauer argues, are not (primarily) interested in expressing personal emotions. Artists offer no "human all-too-human" understanding of the world but want to take us *beyond* the narrow, human standpoint and no longer show the world through a human gaze; they rather provide, as it were, "a view from nowhere," a perspective on things which is no longer dominated by individual interests and desires but instead considers the world from an impersonal, de-individualized viewpoint. Scientists, Schopenhauer holds, manipulate nature in order to serve human urges and interests, whereas artists do not. Artists create works that are not (necessarily) useful for human purposes. Scientific knowledge is a way to come to terms with inhuman nature and manipulate it in order to render it less inhuman, whereas artists try to show things as they are "in themselves," i.e., as they are *before* they are captured in and through human categories and concepts. Art shows the things in their nakedness, stripped from their human meanings, categories, emotions and interests and offers us their universal essences. Artists are no longer bearers of messages or vehicles of emotions. Even music – Schopenhauer's favorite art form – never expresses *particular* emotions, but "only the inner nature, the in-itself" of emotions, and

> does not express this or that particular and definite pleasure, this or that affliction, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, or peace of mind, but joy, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, peace of mind *themselves*, to a certain extent in the abstract, their essential nature, without any accessories, and so also without the motives for them.
>
> (WWR I, 261)

In other words, music expresses, we could say, what is *unemotional* about emotions. The purpose of music is neither the expression nor the arousal of human emotions, but offers bare-stripped, purified, universal and de-humanized emotions, or (as Schopenhauer further puts it) "as it were the innermost soul of the phenomenon without the body," but "united with thorough and unmistakable distinctness" (WWR I, 262). No wonder so many artworks have an alienating effect, for they show us not the world as we are used to perceiving it, i.e., a world full of recognizable human characteristics, categories and conceptions that make us feel at ease and enable us to cope with the things around us. On the contrary, artworks radically disturb this confident picture and enable us to enter a world of inhuman forces.

Whereas scientific investigation is, according to Schopenhauer, merely a kind of systematic extension of our ordinary way of treating objects by which we manipulate

and subject things to our human standpoint, aesthetic and artistic treatments of things offer us the most objective perception of the world. By introducing the notion of objectivity into the realm of aesthetics and art, Schopenhauer sets out to synthesize two radically different views on disinterested knowledge and perception, namely Plato's and Kant's. In Schopenhauer's view, these are perfectly compatible and, moreover, one could even say that his whole philosophy is – as can be gathered from the earliest manuscript remains – a (not always successful) effort to combine Platonic and Kantian insights. His emphasis on the disinterested, objective nature of aesthetic perception is perhaps the most emphatic instance of this complicated enterprise.

There are different ways to observe, perceive and study the world around us: usually we consider it from the perspective of willing individuals. But Schopenhauer believes that a totally different perspective on things is possible: the standpoint of pure will-less subjects of knowledge (which is, as we shall see, no longer really a "standpoint," for it is a view from nowhere, a perspective of a subject no longer governed by an *ego*). As human beings, Schopenhauer says (following Hume), we are no mere "angel heads" but embodied creatures with passions, desires, wishes, interests and affects, and our way of observing the objects around us is inevitably colored and even determined by those subjective, personal, or individual desires and affects. Due to our nature as willing embodied beings, our perception of the world cannot be neutral, disinterested or purely objective: we ordinarily subject it to our personal point of view, and how we see things is always connected with our individual interests, desires and affects – our perception of things is a way of manipulating them, subjecting them to our personal perspective and interests, and making them useful to us. This seems to be the only possible way of considering things and perceiving the world, for if Schopenhauer is right that we are fundamentally *willing* beings, then our perception is inevitably influenced and even determined by our nature as embodied creatures and our individual affects, interests and desires.

2. Art, Objectivity and Death

The only way to escape this "interested," typically human, manipulative way of considering things seems to be *not* considering them at all: the only way to be able to overcome our personal, willing and hence "interested" connection with the world is by giving up each and every connection with it, and ultimately giving up considering things altogether. This is actually a possibility which Schopenhauer takes into consideration seriously, and in his ethics he characterizes suicide and asceticism as attempts to overcome our "interested" relationship with the world. In a way, Schopenhauer's analysis of human beings as willing creatures does seem to have the radical consequence that pure will-less objectivity can be attained only if *we are no longer there*: i.e., if our existence as living, willing individuals has vanished, hence (or so it seems at first sight) only when we are dead. Only then the primordial unity of everything, i.e., the metaphysical unity of the will, will have been restored: our death guarantees, as it were, that the deceptive individual perspective has been abolished completely and reveals the ultimate Schopenhauerian truth, viz. that all is ultimately one and the same thing-in-itself, i.e., one cosmic will: by dying, our individuality will be fully and permanently

absorbed into the cosmic will. So, as Nietzsche will not hesitate to emphasize, Schopenhauer's view of the metaphysical nature of the world as will, the willing and interested nature of human perception and the idea that the individual can only find eternal peace by disappearing as individual, i.e., by passing away, offers no way out of the predicament of either the misery and suffering of individual subjectivity or the eternal peaceful darkness of death or nothingness.

Fortunately, however, Schopenhauer sees a way out of this predicament and sketches a fascinating alternative to both death and "merely subjective" perception. Although the whole world, including human life, is nothing but an uncanny puppet show of one and the same blind and ruthless will, one does not have to give up considering things altogether to be able to attain a state of pure, will-less, and painless perception or intuition (*Anschauung*). For, during a few scarce moments in our lives, all of a sudden

> we enter the state of pure contemplation, we are raised for the moment above all willing, above all desires and cares; we are, so to speak, rid of ourselves. We are no longer the individual that knows in the interest of its constant willing; the correlative of the particular thing to which objects become motives, but the eternal subject of knowing purified of the will, the correlative of the Idea. And we know that these moments, when, delivered from the fierce pressure of the will, we emerge, as it were, from the heavy atmosphere of the earth, are the most blissful that we experience.
>
> (WWR I, 390)

Instead of the complete objectivity of death, Schopenhauer here characterizes a peculiar state of consciousness, in which we are still live subjects and yet become aware of ourselves as pure, *will-less* subjects of knowledge, who have overcome the ordinary state of the willing individuals that we usually are. In this state of pure contemplation, we are raised "above all willing, above all desires and cares," and are able to experience what it is to be overwhelmed by the perception of an object. This state of pure contemplation (in which we become *one* with the object we perceive) is, Schopenhauer argues, *aesthetic*. For it is what happens when a natural object or an art work fascinates us in such a way that our sensory experience of it is no longer driven by *human* needs, interests, and affects. Our ordinary *empirical* consciousness of the object, which is determined by the subjective forms of space, time and causality, has been suspended and replaced by a pure aesthetic way of perceiving. We are fully absorbed in the object and lose ourselves in the contemplation of it:

> When, however, an external cause or inward disposition suddenly raises us out of the endless stream of willing, and snatches knowledge from the thraldom of the will, the attention is now no longer directed to the motives of willing, but comprehends things free from their relation to the will. Thus it considers things without interest, without subjectivity, *purely objectively*; it is entirely given up to them in so far as they are merely representations, and not motives. Then all at once the peace, always sought but always escaping us on that first path of willing, comes to us of its own accord, and all is well with us (*uns its völlig wohl*).
>
> (WWR I, 196; italics added)

It will perhaps be hard to find a more intense and elated characterization of the pleasure and even happiness inherent in aesthetic experience. Although one can hardly deny

the enthusiasm of Schopenhauer's characterization of aesthetic experience, it is nonetheless clear that his description will definitely apply only to *some* aesthetic experiences and does not cover the whole range of the kinds of experiences that are commonly characterized as aesthetic.

The passionate way in which Schopenhauer describes the aesthetic experience cannot be based on mere personal experience, but ought to be situated in the context of his basically pessimistic view of man and world. From his youth onwards, Schopenhauer had been looking for a way of approaching the world that could – at least momentarily – offer a way out of the thralldom of the will and the suffering that is inextricably linked up with it. In 1812, when he was still in Berlin, he already seems to have identified the experience of aesthetic pleasure as the ideal way to escape from the misery of ordinary empirical consciousness of the world, which is full of horror and suffering, and enter into the blissful state of what he then still called the *better consciousness*. Ordinary consciousness is embodied, and connected with individual interests and desires, and since those can only be momentarily satisfied and will constantly be replaced by new ones, they inevitably lead to the pain of unfulfilled desire. The better consciousness, however, is consciousness of oneself as pure will-less, timeless, and painless subject of knowledge. It is an "experience" of being purified of one's own human individuality – which is not really an experience in the usual sense, for (strictly speaking) there is no individual being to experience this, but only a pure, de-individualized mental state and impersonal "vanishing point," a "clear mirror of the object," an imperceptible perceiver; pure awareness of harmony, tranquility and even, Schopenhauer insists, "unearthly serenity" (WWR II, 380). Here we find the clearest instance of Schopenhauer's fascinating blending of Platonism and Buddhism: in a crucial chapter on genius and artistic creativity, Schopenhauer even calls this mental state "the hour of inspiration, the moment of rapture or exaltation . . . The intellect is then of the greatest purity, and becomes the clear mirror of the world" (WWR II, 380). What Schopenhauer describes here is a complex state of mind which is completely purified of emotion, desire, needs and interests, but is by no means passive or apathetic. It creates a radical rupture with ordinary empirical consciousness, which is naturally in the service of our individual needs, urges and affects, and is – in a way – more passive, for it is a mere physiological reaction of our will to the environment. Certain experiences, Schopenhauer argues, are so intense that they are able to lift us above ourselves and enable us to get rid of all the excessive lumber of individual emotions, desires and even thoughts. Our individuality has vanished and all that is left is a state of de-individualized, "pure" subjectivity which is no longer determined by the urges of individual willing.

Beauty thus rests on this disinterested objectivity of perception. Schopenhauer even claims that "everything is beautiful only so long as it does not concern us" (WWR II, 374). The drastic nature of this definition cannot be sufficiently stressed. All typically human, individual ways of considering an object are suspended and what remains is a subject without ego, which perceives the aesthetic object emotionless, thoughtless – we come to see the world "from outside" (WWR I, 372). Schopenhauer's characterization of beauty is, to say the least, unusual. An experience of beauty is, in his terms, abnormal: a purely disinterested, will-less and detached (but also, paradoxically, unusually intense and focused) state of consciousness, in which we have transcended our

individual interests, and have ultimately become the object's "pure mirror" (WWR II, 367). We have become somehow disengaged and even estranged from the world, for we have adopted a stance in which "the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image of perception" (WWR I, 179).

This "abnormal" aesthetic state of mind cannot proceed from a conscious act of will (*Akt der Willkür*): we cannot *decide* to enter into the blessed state of the better consciousness but will always be stimulated by an object that we are fascinated by and through which we can enter into a peaceful, timeless and tranquil state of mind:

> Such a state of itself eliminates the will from consciousness, and in it all things stand before us with enhanced clearness and distinctness, so that we are aware almost alone *of them* and hardly at all *of ourselves*. . . . For we apprehend the world purely objectively, only when we no longer know that we belong to it; and all things appear the more beautiful, the more we are conscious merely of them, and the less we are conscious of ourselves.
>
> (WWR II, 368)

This passage reveals how far removed Schopenhauer's theory of aesthetic perception is from Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgment. Although Schopenhauer's will-lessness clearly echoes Kant's concept of disinterestedness, Schopenhauer radically breaks with the idea that aesthetic experience is based on the reflection and feeling of a judging subject. Schopenhauer's aesthetic subject is a subject in which the capacity to judge – not only of determining but also of reflecting judgment – has vanished altogether. Schopenhauer's pure aesthetic subject does not judge, it is not detached in the sense that it takes some distance to be able to judge the object; it is, on the contrary, totally swallowed and taken in by the object. It does not behave as someone who, after many years, meets an old friend again and studies her features to see whether she has changed much, but as a passionate lover who is so madly in love that he forgets everything, even himself, and melts together with the other and becomes one with her. And perhaps even this comparison is not really accurate enough, since Schopenhauer warns us against too romantic an identification of aesthetic beauty with amorous passion (WWR II, 374): despite his use of terms such as rapture, exaltation and enjoyment, the type of awareness he describes, makes clear that an aesthetic experience is *not* so much a matter of emotions, affects or feelings, but of inner peace, serenity, complete objectivity and painless contemplation; willing is expelled from consciousness.

In this sense, his account is clearly reminiscent of Plato's pure knowledge of the soul. For Plato, however, an experience of beauty is a festive celebration of Being: it is (as in Kant) *to feel alive*. On Schopenhauer's account, though, having an aesthetic experience is an intimation of *death*: the world has become "something foreign" to us (WWR II, 387), for we are pure detached subjects that have become *one* with the object of our perception. We lose ourselves and "become the pure mirror of the objective inner nature of things" (WWR II, 367); "we have stepped into another world . . . where everything that moves our will . . . no longer exists" (WWR I, 197), and are aware only of the deprivation of everything that is typical of individual human being (see WWR I, 178; I, 195–96). We have become will-less, timeless, and totally disengaged subjects – subjects without *ego*; so hardly subjects at all, since we remain "wholly foreign to, and detached from, the scene to be contemplated," and adopt "the view from nowhere"

(WWR II, 373; see Nagel 1986). We have become so overwhelmed by the perception of the object, that we are no longer conscious of our individual selves anymore, and have temporarily become disposed of our own living nature, our own will to life (WWR II, 373).

Aesthetic consciousness is not merely an escape from the torments of our existence as willing subjects, though, but also offers us understanding and knowledge. A peculiar type of knowledge, however: not based on (determinate) concepts, as is the case in the "subjective" kind of knowledge that is scientific knowledge, for instance, but knowledge of, what Schopenhauer calls, (Platonic) *Ideas*.

3. Objective Knowledge of (Platonic) Ideas

As noted above, Schopenhauer was always fascinated by the possibility of a "better consciousness," not only as a kind of awareness that enables us to escape from the sufferings that are inherent in our nature as willing individuals, but also as a path to a superior kind of knowledge and understanding which transcends the ordinary way of perceiving and coping with the world around us and our position in it (WWR I, 372; WWR II, 386).

Ordinary knowledge needs concepts to be able to understand the things around us and carve nature at its joints. In the aesthetic state of consciousness described above, however, the object is not known by means of concepts; aesthetic cognition is not characterized by the conceptual clarity and rigid distinctions typical of scientific insights, for "we are entirely satisfied by the impression of a work of art only when it leaves behind something that, in spite of all our reflection on it, we cannot bring down to the distinctness of a concept" (WWR II, 409). Although Schopenhauer continually identifies the Ideas as Platonic – as timeless, universal essences – this crucial observation intimates that his characterization of artwork in terms of vehicles of knowledge and understanding that transcend our conceptual knowledge of objects is close to Kant's suggestion that works of art communicate *aesthetic ideas*. Aesthetic ideas, Kant says, are the products of the artist's imagination, which strives "toward something that lies beyond the bounds of experience" – or more precisely, "inner intuitions (*innern Anschauungen*) to which no concept can be completely adequate" (Kant 1987, § 49, 5:314). This is exactly the thought that we find in Schopenhauer, but it should not blind us to the important differences between their respective views: artistic imagination in Kant is "productive," for it invents intuitions and produces new configurations, whereas for Schopenhauer the Ideas are the timeless universals which the artist merely discovers by adopting an objectifying, disinterested and de-personalized stance towards the world. Nonetheless, the suggestion that art works communicate Ideas that offer a kind of understanding or knowledge that cannot be reduced to the knowledge we gain through concepts is important, for it gives the lie to those that consider aesthetic knowledge to be inferior to the (scientific and philosophical) sort of knowledge that is conceptual in nature.

Yet what kind of knowledge Schopenhauer has in mind when he characterizes willless aesthetic knowledge in terms of knowledge of timeless Ideas still remains puzzling. One commentator offers the following:

> The Ideas might just be ordinary perceptual objects . . . their universality having to do . . . with the selectiveness of attention paid to them by the observer . . . Perceiving an Idea . . . is a matter of perceiving an ordinary object but with one's attention focussed on its essential, and away from its inessential aspects.
>
> (Young 1987, 434)

What is significant in an object, though, does not necessarily coincide with the "universal" it is supposed to be an instance of (see Janaway 1996, 53). What is significant in an object is not necessarily something universal. In artworks minute details of brushwork, color hues, voice timbre, etc. are often more artistically relevant and significant than the ideas conveyed. Moreover, the universal ideas that are expressed in some masterpiece painting may often be rather trivial. If the way in which the artist renders the subject-matter does not really engage us in stimulating and moving ways and enrich our imaginative capacities, the art work will not be of much value (and will definitely not lead to the blissful state of the "better consciousness" which Schopenhauer identifies as the aesthetic attitude). Good art not only occasions interesting ideas but develops our capacities for discrimination and appreciation. The value of a work of art mainly depends on the way it penetrates and shapes our grasp of the ideas and attitudes conveyed. Art's cognitive value cannot be reduced to the ideas – Platonic or not – that they express and communicate. The way in which they stimulate our imaginative perception and shape our discriminatory capacities is at least as important a value of good art as conveying crucial thoughts or ideas might be.

Schopenhauer's Platonic idealism fails to accommodate for the particularly valuable way in which art can express ideas, thoughts, emotions and attitudes. This is a fundamental value of good art, though. Take any work by such masters as Rogier van der Weyden, Lorenzo Lotto, René Magritte and Alberto Giacometti, for example. The ideas they convey and themes they treat may at times be very trivial, but the value of their work does not solely (nor perhaps primarily) depend on the content of the ideas they communicate. It is the sophisticated, complex and often radical way those artists challenge, shape and transform our visual attention and imagination, using multiple revolutionary techniques and contrasting distinct detailing which renders some of their works eminent masterpieces. Schopenhauer does pay some attention to the exquisite way in which Dutch still-life painters manage to direct "such purely objective perception to the most insignificant objects, and set up a lasting monument of their objectivity and spiritual peace in paintings of *still life*," and "in the same spirit landscape painters, especially Ruysdael, have often painted extremely insignificant landscape objects, and have thus produced the same effect even more delightfully" (WWR I, 197).

Yet he seems too preoccupied with defending art against Plato's estimation of it. Plato claimed that art is worthless and even harmful, since it only offers the illusion of knowledge and leads us away from a genuine understanding of the world. Contra Plato, Schopenhauer argues that art can afford true knowledge and understanding. Now he is so eager to repudiate Plato's scathingly negative estimation of art by offering a Platonic answer himself, that he does not pay sufficient attention to the way in which art can be cognitively significant, *not* because it necessarily conveys universal, timeless, Platonic Ideas, but (more importantly) due to the way it shapes, expands and deepens our cognitive and imaginative capacities and enriches our mental life. The way in which

such artists as Orlandus Lassus, Bach, Shakespeare, Keats, Wilde, Rothko, Pollock, Magritte, etc. have been successful in modifying the forms, styles and media through which they transmit their ideas explains the significance and timeless value of their work. Not (primarily) because they communicated universal or revolutionary ideas, but because they expressed their ideas in an absorbing, touching and enriching way, and shaped how we look at what their art expresses. Thus what matters is not primarily the nature or content of the ideas themselves, but whether the media and styles of representing or expressing them deepen our responses to them and shape and modify our grasp of the ideas conveyed – and not necessarily, as Schopenhauer would have it, how they enable us to adopt an objectifying, "disengaged" stance towards the miseries of the world, in which we feel no longer concerned by them.

4. Tragic Art, Concerned Individuals and the Objective Stance

Although Schopenhauer emphasizes the tranquil nature of aesthetic contemplation, this does not really apply to all art forms, and does not apply to the effects of tragedy at all. Whereas observing a tulip or still-life painting can definitely have a soothing effect on us, a tragedy compels us to attend to features of life we normally tend to shy away from. It makes us dwell on bloodshed, murder, and cruel violence. By foregrounding the evil aspects in particularly vivid and striking ways, it invites or even forces us to focus on the disturbing aspects of humanity, which is ultimately vicious, unjust and ugly. A tragedy confronts the spectator with, what Schopenhauer calls, "the guilt of existence itself" (WWR I, 254) and the bitterness and uselessness of life, and hence with the futility of all our individual striving. Hence, the aesthetic spectator experiences uneasiness and even disgust, for he understands "that it is better to tear his heart away from life, to turn his willing away from it, not to love the world and life," and "thus in the depth of his being the consciousness is then stirred that for a different kind of willing there must be a different kind of existence also" (WWR II, 435). Schopenhauer even writes that the best tragedies show us:

> those powers that destroy happiness and life, and in such a way that the path to them is at any moment open even to us. We see the greatest suffering brought about by entanglements whose essence could be assumed even by our own fate, and by actions that perhaps even we might be capable of committing, and so we cannot complain of injustice. Then, shuddering, we feel ourselves already in the midst of hell (*dann fühlen wir schaudernd uns schon mitten in der Hölle*).
>
> (WWR I, 255)

Tragedy not only depicts the renunciation of the will on stage, but also apparently makes the spectators *shudder* at the depicted horrors. The word "shuddering" (*schaudernd*) is especially striking here. The force of a tragedy seems to be that it truly involves an individual human being and necessitates a *personal* (or subjective) reaction. Without any personal involvement as a spectator, we would not be moved at all by what the characters on stage have to endure. So it is not the pure subject of knowledge, the subject without *I*, described above, which seems to be explicitly addressed by tragedy.

Contrary to other forms of art, tragedies do not address detached aesthetic subjects, but *concerned individuals* that are able to empathize with the characters and events on stage. And while the younger Schopenhauer still thought that the renunciation of the will occurs principally in the characters of the play and *not* in the spectator, later (in the 1844 edition of *The World as Will and Representation*) he realizes that forsaking our personal interests and desires necessarily presupposes the personal involvement of a willing individual. And even already in 1818 he writes the following about the effects of tragedy:

> In one individual [the will] appears powerfully, in another more feebly. Here and there it reaches thoughtfulness and is softened more or less by the light of knowledge, until at last in the individual case this knowledge is purified and enhanced by suffering itself. It then reaches the point where the phenomenon, the veil of Maya, no longer deceives it. It sees through the form of the phenomenon, the *principium individuationis*; the egoism resting on this expires with it. The *motives* that were previously so powerful now lose their force, and instead of them, the complete knowledge of the real nature of the world, acting as a *quieter* of the will, produces resignation, the giving up not merely of life, but of the whole will to life itself.
>
> (WWR I, 253)

We are surprisingly far removed from a purely aesthetic experience – at least in the sense in which Schopenhauer interprets the term "aesthetic." It is therefore worth noting that in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, published in 1844, Schopenhauer draws an analogy between the effects of tragedy and the feeling of the sublime (*das Erhabene*), for the tragic consists in enjoying that which "directly opposes the will" (WWR II, 433; see also Vandenabeele 2003). Schopenhauer sets out to explain the "paradox of tragedy," which dates back to Aristotle, i.e., how we can take pleasure in horrifying events (see Vandenabeele 2007, 574–78; 2008, 199–208). He attempts to do so by insisting that we comprehend the depicted events as terrible for humanity *in general*, and not just for our individual selves (see Chapter 14 in this volume by Alex Neill: Schopenhauer on Tragedy and the Sublime). For Schopenhauer, tragedy stands apart from other art forms, because it does not merely offer an aesthetically rewarding experience but first and foremost yields an *ethically significant* insight into the true nature of man and world. It offers us a universal Idea of human existence, and thus induces a pure will-less, objective state of mind. This arguably explains our fascination for tragedies, i.e., explains why we do not merely turn away from them in utter horror and disgust.

Schopenhauer's emphasis on the objective nature of artistic knowledge shows the deep unity underlying not merely the different art forms (architecture, painting, sculpture, literature, and music too), but also of Schopenhauerian aesthetics and ethics as such. Although Schopenhauer clearly (and justly) distinguishes *playful* aesthetic appreciation from *serious* ethical judgment and action (WWR I, 267), he does draw interesting parallels between both, stressing their fundamental unity. Art may be merely "the *camera obscura* which shows the objects more purely, and enables us to survey and comprehend them better. It is the play within the play, the stage on the stage in *Hamlet*" (WWR I, 266–67) and the artist "bears the cost of producing that play; in other words, he himself is the will objectifying itself and remaining in constant suffering," whereas

in the ethical man *par excellence* – "the saint who has attained resignation" – the will freely abolishes itself and the will to life is completely *denied* (WWR I, 285). Yet, despite the important differences between aesthetic contemplation and ethical resignation (which we cannot deal with here), it will be clear that, on Schopenhauer's view, there is a common factor that binds the two inextricably together. This common factor will again be best illustrated by focusing on tragic art.

The value of tragedy does not reside solely in aesthetic contemplation, but in *understanding* that it may be better to give up willing altogether. Its chief merit, Schopenhauer holds, lies in the peculiar kind of understanding it offers and the ethical stance it may henceforth provoke in a spectator. Schopenhauer has misled several commentators by concentrating on the old (Aristotelian) question of how something tragic can still offer us pleasure (see Vandenabeele 2008). But the value of tragedy does not ultimately lie in the pleasure it may yield despite its depiction of bleak and horrific contents, but in the specific ethical attitude it may generate, which is, for Schopenhauer, valuable in its own right and may lead to salvation and enlightenment through, what he calls, the complete denial of the will to life. All art – and hence definitely also the highest of all the poetic arts: tragedy – merely offers a certain consolation that makes us momentarily forget life's appalling miseries (WWR I, 372) and yields a better understanding of the world and ourselves. At best, it awakens for a few moments the desire for "an existence of an entirely different kind, a different world" (WWR II, 433). The experience of utter horror and even disgust at the sight of the terrible events moves us personally and prompts us to turn away from the will to life, instead of remaining in peaceful contemplation of it. Thus at least part of our experience of a tragedy is therefore not pleasurable at all, but this does not make it less valuable for it, on the contrary. Tragedy is even superior to other art forms, for it makes us understand the real (limited) value of our lives as human beings and the world we live in.

Yet Schopenhauer confuses the distinction between a universal and a particular truth with the distinction between a truth that is grasped by a will-less subject and a truth that is grasped by a willing individual. A tragedy does communicate universal truths through particular events and individual characters on stage, but this does not rule out that it may also demand a spectator's *personal* involvement. And only because of this personal involvement can tragedy get the profound significance it really deserves. One gains some kind of understanding or knowledge from a tragedy. Again, watching a tragedy is *not* a purely aesthetic experience in this sense. The value of great tragedies such as *Othello* and *Wallenstein* is tightly entwined with a profound concern for the rough and brutish aspects of human nature, and does not involve merely the intellect's escaping the service of the will and operating in a disinterested way. Since what we learn from tragedies about the world and human nature is undoubtedly horrifying, it can be justified only through deliverance (*Erlösung*) from suffering and life, complete resignation and "denial" or abolition of the will (see WWR I, 397).

As Schopenhauer himself recognizes, the horror "is brought *terribly near to us*" and "shows us those powers that destroy happiness and life, and in such a way that the path to them is at any moment open *even to us*" (WWR I, 254–55; italics added). Experiencing tragic art really involves being confronted with horrifying truths that affect us directly as concerned individuals; truths which cannot be turned into pleasurable spectacles that can be contemplated by a detached pure subject of knowing. On the contrary, the

essence of the experience of a tragedy is not that it compels us to contemplate the world but instead makes us "turn away from the will to life itself" (WWR II, 433).

"Turning away from the will to life itself" is, however, exactly the kind of transformation that – despite their obvious differences – ultimately unifies aesthetic and ethical "experience" in Schopenhauer's view. What Schopenhauer acknowledges as characteristic of both the aesthetic *and* the ethical attitude toward life, is the hardly expressible state of mind, which we identified above as *objective*. This objective state of mind, Schopenhauer insists, cannot really be positively described in philosophical terms, but "can be expressed only negatively as denial of the will" (WWR I, 410). It cannot be positively known or "experienced" – at least, not when "experience" is understood in its ordinary, "human" sense – but some people can gain access to it, often through severe discipline and heavy effort. Paradoxically enough, this state of "objective knowledge" cannot really be called knowledge anymore, since "it no longer has the form of subject and object" (WWR I, 410): it is an "experience" that "cannot be further communicated" (ibid.) – it is, what Schopenhauer calls, knowledge *sub specie aeternitatis* (i.e., under the aspect of eternity).

Understanding that it may be better to turn ourselves away from this wretched world may be an important effect of, for instance, watching a tragedy, but whether this kind of insight really provides pleasure is highly questionable. Of course, it may provide pleasure if we have the sense that we have discovered something important about ourselves or about the world, if we understand that the work has shaped and deepened our thoughts through our experience of it. But claiming that art is valuable *merely* because of the pleasure this insight or understanding arouses is – to say the least – highly implausible. As Matthew Kieran says, "art stretches, extends and revolutionises the ways we come to see the world. It is one of the most powerful means of cultivating our perceptual capacities" (Kieran 2005, 147), and, we might add, of enriching our understanding of the world and ourselves.

Tragic art "furnishes us a vivid illustration of the frustration of human effort and of the vanity of this whole existence," and enables us "to will something better" and escape from this dreadful life steeped in suffering, no more no less (WWR II, 635; WWR II, 574). The idea that it would be wiser to turn away from life altogether arises "only in an obscure feeling" (WWR II, 574). It merely offers some sort of intuitive understanding that it might be better not to interfere in the "natural course of things" and instead calmly and compassionately welcome the events of life (see Chapter 17 in this volume by David E. Cartwright: Schopenhauer on the Value of Compassion).

5. The Objectivity of Art and the Abolition of the Self

Despite what some commentators suggest, Schopenhauer does not, however, expect art – not even tragic art – directly to offer resignation. The sedation and abolition of the will to life is ultimately an *effect of grace*:

> In consequence of such an effect of grace, man's whole inner nature is fundamentally changed and reversed, so that he no longer wills anything of all that he previously willed

> so intensely; thus a new man, so to speak, actually takes the place of the old. . . . Behind our existence lies something that becomes accessible to us only by our shaking off the world.
>
> (WWR I, 404–405)

Thus works of art, especially those that confront us with the more tragic aspects of life, may awaken in us some kind of enlightened understanding and offer us a "new birth or regeneration" (WWR I, 404; see also WWR II, 574), although whether or not we will enter into this enlightened state, this "kingdom of grace," wherein our will to life vanishes completely and our "whole being is fundamentally changed and reversed," is not within our control: it is "the *effect of grace*" (WWR I, 403; I, 404). This sudden radical transformation from my life as a willing individual to a state of pure objectivity – for this is what Schopenhauer alludes to – is not something that I can deliberately intend or *will*. On the contrary, willing and striving to attain a will-less objective stance may well be the worst possible way to achieve it (see Reginster 2009, 104–108). But aesthetic perception – which is itself more often than not a state of grace – can still be an excellent occasion to reach this blessed will-less state, which is "man's greatest prerogative" (WWR I, 404), for it saves us from the damaging influence of the will to life.

Aesthetic contemplation thus not only enables us to escape misery and boredom, but also offers us at least a fleeting glimpse of another, "objective" world, and may ultimately lead to a more permanent attainment of an ethical stance of complete resignation, which transcends the common, "natural" and egocentric attitude that we usually occupy as ordinary willing individuals (see Wicks 2008, 127–41; 188–90). The objective apprehension of the world, which we attain through aesthetic contemplation and art, may yield the insight that our individual selves may not be as important as we happen to think from our narrow, bigoted perspectives, and add to our lives the deep tranquility, complete serenity and inner peace that so many of us long for but never attain – governed as our lives are by the *principium individuationis* and the sheer torments of the will to life:

> But we now turn our glance from our own needy and perplexed nature to those who have overcome the world, in whom the will, having reached complete self-knowledge, has found itself again in everything, and then freely denied itself, and who then merely wait to see the last trace of the will vanish with the body that is animated with that trace. Then, instead of the restless pressure and effort; instead of the constant transition from desire to apprehension and from joy to sorrow; instead of the never satisfied and never-dying hope that constitutes the life-dream of the man who wills, we see that peace that is higher than all reason, that ocean-like calmness of the spirit, that deep tranquillity, that unshakable confidence and serenity, whose mere reflection in the countenance, as depicted by Raphael and Correggio, is a complete and certain gospel. Our knowledge remains; our will has vanished.
>
> (WWR I, 411)

This passage reveals the radical nature of the transformation Schopenhauer is talking about: true knowledge, i.e., the understanding attained through the disinterested perception of aesthetic objects (and, through these, of universal Ideas), may ultimately

quieten the will and bring about the abolition of nothing less than myself as such, i.e., of my "real self," for "the real self is the will to life" (WWR II, 606). When this happens, knowledge does not merely escape the service of the will, as in pure aesthetic contemplation, but leads to the complete *self-suppression of the will*, which characterizes ethical resignation and ultimately involves the elimination of the willing self. This radical abolition of the self induces genuine peace of mind, freedom and salvation (*Heil*), and deliverance from suffering and, hence, from life – or "Nirvana," as the Buddhists call it (see Wicks 2008, 87–94) – *beyond* good and evil, since "after the arrival of the 'new birth', the morality or immorality of previous conduct becomes a matter of indifference" (WWR I, 357; II, 607; see also II, 608ff.). This state of complete repose, which cannot be brought on by a resolve or an act of will, but "comes suddenly as if flying in from without" (WWR I, 404), is not an experience of something positive, and can only be reached by whomever has given up his "real self." Nothing positive has really been attained – apart from the fact that one has reached a state of complete objectivity and tranquility. But this peace, tranquility and genuine freedom is not *human* peace, tranquility and freedom, but an *inhuman* empty stance, in which the illusory character of ordinary empirical knowledge has been unmasked and "the veil of Maya" has been torn to pieces; now we really *know* and we return, as it were, to a more "natural" and "original" unity with all that is and has been. The abolition of the will in us is at the same time the disappearance of our personal characters, our (willing) selves; our personal standpoint vanishes (or, which is basically the same, broadens endlessly) until life and death, right and wrong, dream and reality ultimately become "one and the same" again and return to their authentic primordial unity.

What then remains, when the will is abolished, is nothingness (WWR I, 409–12). No more thoughts to be thought, no more feelings to be felt, no more emotions to be disturbed by; not even silence, darkness or light – nothing. This is all that is left to those in whom the will has denied itself. Not much, many people will put forward now, and they are probably right. But perhaps Schopenhauer might also be right after all: for those, who are still occupied by their own desires, emotions and interests, who are striving to be happy and successful and desperately long to be loved, and who refuse to let things take their natural course, are surely not better off – for they are not even able to eschew superfluous suffering and unnecessary illusion.

See also 1 Schopenhauer on Scientific Knowledge; 9 Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas; 16 Schopenhauer on the Metaphysics of Art and Morality; 17 Schopenhauer on the Value of Compassion; 18 Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy; 19 Life-Denial versus Life-Affirmation: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Pessimism and Asceticism; 23 Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner.

Note

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Part IV

Compassion, Resignation and Sainthood

16

Schopenhauer on the Metaphysics of Art and Morality

DANIEL CAME

Schopenhauer's accounts of art and morality emerge from his metaphysics and pessimism. In Book 1 of his main work, *The World as Will and Representation*, the empirical world is argued to be merely an idea or representation of the thing-in-itself, which, in Book 2, is identified as a fundamental force or energy (the will) that is generative of all things. The world of phenomena, the empirical world, appears as objectifications of the noumenal will. There are multiple grades of objectification: forces of nature, rocks, plants, animals, humans, states of consciousness and so on. The will is "present and undivided in every object of nature and every living being" (WWR I, 102). Particular objects or individuals are "copies" of "Platonic Ideas," the latter being models or archetypes of the plurality of particulars which populate the empirical realm. The will enters the human sphere in the form of perpetual desire. All self-conscious beings are characterized by an incessant and inherently painful willing. Willing is a sufficient condition of suffering, because all willing arises necessarily from a want or deficiency, and to experience a want is to suffer: to live is to will; to will is to suffer; therefore to live is to suffer. Indeed, nature as a whole is destructive and amoral. Echoing the idea of the fallen world, Schopenhauer exhibits a nihilistic hatred of the empirical and gives expression to a tortured yearning for metaphysical consolation. He quotes St. Paul: "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together" (Romans 8.22).

However, for humans there are three possible avenues of release from this unhappy state. The first is through the contemplation in (good) art of the realm of Platonic Ideas, whereby we, albeit temporarily, see through the illusory realm of phenomena, lose our egoistic orientation to the world, and overcome the division between subject and object. Here Schopenhauer explicitly opposes Plato: good art does not copy particulars, it copies the universals themselves. The second is the instinct of compassion. Morality *überhaupt* concerns the thing-in-itself and is thus "incomparably more important than the physical which concerns only phenomena or representations." The moral, by contrast, discloses "the depths of our own inner nature" (WWR II, 589). The third is the

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denial of the will or "resignation," the renunciation of self and world. It is in these terms that Schopenhauer understands our "final emancipation" from the will and our "true salvation" – a condition in which we become "the very opposite of what we are" – i.e., non-will (nothing). Thus Schopenhauer finds value in modes of experience that entail the dissolution of one's own individual subjectivity and hence release from suffering. In this chapter examine the interrelations between Schopenhauer's accounts of these three modes of experience.

1. Background: Schopenhauer's Methodological Presuppositions

Before proceeding, let us look at the general metaphysical framework and methodology from which Schopenhauer derives his views on art and morality. As is well known, Schopenhauer, following Kant, thinks that there is a distinction between the ideal and the real, the way the world appears to us in experience and the way the world is in itself. According to Schopenhauer, for any object or thing, the perceived object must be both something in itself and something for others; the denial of this thesis entails that objects would be only representations and that this entails absolute idealism which in turn entails solipsism. Schopenhauer argues that there is a deep gulf between the ideal and the real, though this is one of the things of which we are not immediately aware. He distinguishes between two modes of existence: a subjective and an objective existence, a being for self and a being for others, a consciousness of one's own self and consciousness of other things. These two are given to us in a fundamentally different way. "About oneself, everyone knows directly, about everything else only very indirectly. We must learn to understand nature from ourselves, not ourselves from nature. What is directly known to us must give us the explanation of what is only indirectly known, not conversely" (WWR I, 196).

Schopenhauer thinks, in effect, that phenomenology can disclose knowledge of what he calls the "Being-in-itself" of things, that is, the ultimate or inner nature of things. Schopenhauer is doing pre-Heideggerian fundamental ontology. In the first division of *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues that the inquiry into the nature of Being has to proceed via inquiry into the nature of the being (namely, *Dasein*) that asks about the nature of Being. In a similar fashion, Schopenhauer thinks that the uniquely correct starting point for philosophy is the self and its private experiences. If ultimate knowledge exists, it must be known in a direct and immediate manner. One can investigate the nature of Being only by examining what appears to oneself in one's own subjective phenomenological field. Schopenhauer's reason for privileging the pure interiority of one's own consciousness is as follows: it is only in the case of one's own interiority that one has immediate and direct acquaintance with anything. All other forms of acquaintance are indirect and mediated by perceptual data and/or concepts. Schopenhauer's starting point thus resembles Descartes's understanding of the soul as confined within the goldfish bowl of its own experiences. "The world is my representation," and all that is immediately given in this representation is consciousness itself, which "conditions" the world as it apprehends it (WWR II, 5). In Schopenhauer's view, by taking *cogito ergo sum* as the only proposition that can be known to be certain, and provisionally regarding the existence of the external world as problematical, Descartes

attained insight into the only correct starting point and secure foundation for philosophy: "this point, indeed, is essentially and of necessity *the subjective, our own consciousness*. For this alone is and remains that which is immediate; everything else, be it what it may, is first mediated and conditioned by consciousness, and therefore dependent on it" (WWR II, 4). Accordingly, Schopenhauer thinks that true philosophy must be essentially *idealistic*, that is, it must regard as axiomatic the thesis that the objective, material world in general exists only as representation and not as something in itself. "For nothing is more certain than that no one ever came out of himself in order to identify himself immediately with things different from him; but everything of which he has certain, sure, and hence immediate knowledge, lies within his consciousness. Beyond this consciousness, there can be no immediate certainty." Therefore, while it is entirely appropriate for natural science to assume the objective world as actually existing, this is "not appropriate to the standpoint of philosophy, which has to go back to what is primary and original" (WWR II, 5).

This epistemological picture of the self as confined within the sphere of its own representations seems to rule out the possibility of going beyond those representations, never mind that of penetrating into the inner nature of things and learning what they are in themselves. But, since we are not merely the knowing subject, but also among those entities we require to know, Schopenhauer suggests that a "way from within stands open to us to that real inner nature of things to which we cannot penetrate from without . . . Precisely as such the thing-in-itself can come into consciousness only quite directly, namely by it itself being conscious of itself." It is the private, inner world of one's own subjective consciousness which provides "the only narrow gateway to truth" (WWR II, 196).

Schopenhauer arrives at his identification of the will as the thing-in-itself through regarding the deliverances of first personal subjective consciousness as veridical. And it is on the basis of this Cartesian methodological presupposition that he derives his views concerning the metaphysics of aesthetic, moral, and ascetic experience. Of course, one can object to Schopenhauer's views on the ground that phenomenology can never be evidence of anything beyond itself. But even if this is granted, it does not drain Schopenhauer's accounts of these modes of experience of their philosophical interest. For Schopenhauer's views on these matters are, I think, rich in phenomenological insight. That is, they are, at the very least, plausible and illuminating accounts of *what it is like* to undergo these kinds of experience; they therefore shed light on the nature of value experience in general.

2. Empirical Consciousness

The aesthetic, moral, and ascetic states are, for Schopenhauer, profoundly mysterious. They constitute states of consciousness that are radically different from ordinary, everyday consciousness. He contrasts them with ordinary or empirical consciousness as this has been elucidated in Books 1 and 2 of *The World as Will and Representation*. Ordinary, everyday consciousness is consciousness of the world of objects. This form of consciousness in general is conditioned, first, by the knowledge of the subject itself as a necessary presupposition of a world of experience, and, second, by the particular

forms of our perception and cognition. Consequently, empirical consciousness is only ever consciousness of mere phenomena and has no access to the world of things-in-themselves. Even the knowing subject itself belongs to the realm of mere phenomena.

Empirical consciousness is a mode of "interested" engagement in the world. It relates essentially to what the individual being needs to know in order to provide the will with what it desires. Specifically, the individual needs to know the relations – spatial, temporal, and causal – in which things stand to one another. This makes intuitive sense. In order to know how an object bears on my interests I must know where it is in space and time in relation to me, and how it stands causally to my needs and desires (roughly, whether the object is conducive or obstructive to the interests of my will). So, when an object is encountered in empirical consciousness it shows up as a potential means or impediment to an individual subject's ends or desires; crucially, it is not encountered as itself an end. When an object is encountered in empirical consciousness its "absolute essence" is subtracted or erased; that is, the object's intrinsic nature is omitted from consciousness. This is because from the standpoint of the will the "absolute essence" of an object is irrelevant: "The ordinary man does not linger over the perception . . . but quickly looks for the concept under which it is to be brought" (WWR II, 187–88).

In empirical consciousness, the intellect is constrained in its "natural condition of servitude" to the will. In this activity, the intellect knows only relations of objects, primarily their relations to the will, but also the relations of objects to one another. Now, according to Schopenhauer, the knowledge of the reciprocal relations that obtain between objects exists only *indirectly* in the service of the will. That is, such knowledge is parasitic on ordinary empirical consciousness, the apprehending of relations, but at the same time surpasses the level or scope of knowledge of relations that is necessary for the projects of the will. In other words, such knowledge is not practical knowledge. It is for this reason that Schopenhauer regards scientific knowledge as forming the transition to a purely objective mode of knowledge that is entirely independent of the will. Knowledge of the relations that obtain between objects is scientific knowledge. Knowledge of an object that is entirely non-relational – i.e., its content does not include any of the object's relational properties – is aesthetic knowledge. Both forms of knowledge exist on a continuum of disinterestedness or objectivity which increases the more the intellect is able to free itself from the demands of the will. In scientific knowledge, a multiplicity of relations pertaining to an object are apprehended and the object's nature thereby appears more fully and distinctly than, say, when the object appears only in relation to the individual will. But although in scientific knowledge the real nature of the object appears more distinctly, it itself is entirely different from these relational facts. In this mode of cognition, the servitude of the intellect to the will becomes increasingly indirect. But if the intellect has sufficient power to gain dominance over the will and thereby abandon entirely the relations of objects to the will, in order to apprehend instead their purely objective nature, then the "intellect . . . freely soars aloft and no longer belongs to a will. In the particular thing, it knows merely the essential, and therefore its whole species; consequently, it now has for its object the Ideas" (WWR II, 363–64).

3. Aesthetic Consciousness

Aesthetic consciousness consists in the dissolution of the subject's sense of his own individuality and subjectivity and the ensuing cessation of desire-driven suffering. When we are absorbed in contemplation of an object aesthetically, that is, when we are perceiving beauty, "we lose ourselves entirely in the object . . . we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist only as pure subject, as clear mirror of the object, so that it is as though the object alone existed without anyone to perceive it, and thus we are no longer able to separate the perceiver from the perception, but the two have become one, since the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image of perception" (WWR I, 179). According to Schopenhauer, as we have seen, ordinary empirical consciousness apprehends objects in relation to the will – that is, *interestedly*. By contrast, in aesthetic consciousness, because subjectivity along with its subtracting effects on the appearance of the object recedes, the subject, to the extent that one can still speak of a subject, becomes a clear mirror of the object. And because subjectivity has receded, so has one's desires and one's interested way of engaging with objects and construing them in relation to one's subjective interests and desires. Consequently, one's engagement with an object in aesthetic experience is disinterested and painless. Since subjectivity has receded, we no longer relate the object of aesthetic attention to our will, from which it follows that in this state nothing can be an object of desire. Given Schopenhauer's view of the nature of suffering as caused by desire, the absence of desire in aesthetic consciousness entails an absence of suffering. Hence we attain a "painless state . . . for a moment we are delivered from the miserable pressure of the will. We celebrate the Sabbath of the penal servitude of willing; the wheel of Ixion stands still" (WWR I, 196).

The aesthetic subject, then, undergoes a fundamental transformation. It becomes the "pure will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowing." In addition, the object of aesthetic attention undergoes a radical change. Since the subjectivity of empirical consciousness has receded, so too have the subject-dependent categories of space and time. It follows, clearly, that the object is not apprehended in space and time. Schopenhauer says that space and time are the *principium individuationis* ("the principle of individuation"). For something to be an individual it must be located in space and time. We separate objects one from another in terms of their spatio-temporal locations.[1] So the object of aesthetic attention is not an individual. Rather, it is, in Schopenhauer's term, the "Platonic Idea" of the species of the particular thing it is.

Schopenhauer's transcendental explanation of the disinterestedness of aesthetic response as an escape from the ordinary way of perceiving and estimating an object is, perhaps, metaphysically flawed. But it relies upon a plausible description of the phenomenology of aesthetic experience. Art does indeed seem to condense and illumine the world, directing attention on particulars to the exclusion of all other things. As Wittgenstein says:

> The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*; and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is the connection between art and ethics. The usual way of

> looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside. In such a way that they have the whole world as background . . . If I have been contemplating a stove, and then am told: but now all you know is the stove, my result does indeed seem trivial. For this represents the matter as if I had studied the stove as one among the many things in the world. But if I was contemplating the stove *it* was my world, and everything else colourless by contrast with it.
>
> (Wittgenstein 1979, 84)

In a similar vein, Iris Murdoch (2003, 59) notes that

> the general notion of a spiritual liberation through art is accessible to common-sense as an account of our relationship to works of art when the walls of the ego fall, the noisy ego is silenced, we are freed from possessive selfish desires and anxieties and are one with what we contemplate, enjoying a unique unity with something which is itself unique . . . we see through, pass through, the busy multiplicity of particulars and contemplate, touch, become one with "the thing itself."

It is indeed plausible that when we take pleasure in something we find beautiful, the pleasure gained is not the pleasure of having got something that we desire. A work of art depends for its capacity to induce aesthetic states of consciousness on one's ability to banish one's troubles whilst one is engaged with it. If I listen to a piece of music but cannot discard my worries, nothing happens. So, putting the question of the truth value of Schopenhauer's metaphysical conclusions aside, Schopenhauer's claims regarding aesthetic experience seem phenomenologically true, or nearly true. That is, at the level of phenomenology he seems right to regard as the hallmark of aesthetic experience a diminished sense of self and world along with the reciprocal relations of space, time, and causality that obtain between objects in ordinary experience. He may, of course, overstate his case. That is, one might object that even in deepest aesthetic absorption we never lose all awareness of ourselves or of space and time. But something approaching this kind of experience does seem to occur in aesthetic experience. Indeed, in absorbed contemplation *tout court* one concentrates more on the object of attention than anything else, and the deeper one's absorption the less one is aware of self, space, time and the relations in which the object of attention stands to other objects.

As I shall suggest in section 5, Schopenhauer's primary concern in *The World as Will and Representation* is soteriological. From the perspective of this ultimate concern, the most important feature of aesthetic experience for Schopenhauer is the "delight" (*Wohlgefallen*) we take in the aesthetic contemplation of art or nature. Schopenhauer conceives of this condition as one of perfect calm – the "blessedness of will-less perception" – which is consequent upon our escape from the relentless suffering which comes with ordinary volitional being. It is this state of calm to which we give expression when we call something "beautiful." Schopenhauer quite clearly conceives of this pleasure in negative terms, as he does all instances of pleasure; that is, pleasure in general is merely the feeling of relief that follows from the cessation of painful desiring. And, as we have seen, this cessation of desiring follows from the dissolution of individual subjectivity. Herein lies a glimpse of what Schopenhauer will in the end define as the *summum bonum* for human beings: nothingness or total extinction. As Christopher Janaway (2007, 197) notes in his recent book on Nietzsche, "the key to the unity of

[Schopenhauer's] thought is the thesis that *value can be retrieved to the extent that the individual embodiment of will abates*." It seems right that this is the trajectory of Schopenhauer's axiology which culminates in Schopenhauer's doctrine of "true salvation" as consisting in "the denial of the will" and the complete abolition of the self and one's own existence in general. In Schopenhauer's hands, this axiology of selflessness is appropriated in the service of his wider soteriological end, namely, identifying the conditions of the complete and permanent abolition of self and the "blessed peace of nothingness." Ultimately, then, the value of art for Schopenhauer derives from its status as a kind of signpost to the higher condition of asceticism. The contemplation of art and the ensuing temporary silencing of the ego show that there is attainable for human beings a state that is free from the domination of the will and the evil that attends all egoism and strife. Art, in other words, points to a mystical state in which our true salvation consists – permanent nothingness.

Moral experience is ranked more highly than aesthetic experience by Schopenhauer because it offers a more compelling signpost to asceticism and complete renunciation of the will. For as we shall see in the next section, the experience of compassion, at its limit, involves recognition of the suffering of the world *in toto*. In the wake of this experience, Schopenhauer thinks, one is crushed and consequently turns away or withdraws from the world in disgust. At the same time, Schopenhauer seems to rank tragedy as highly as the moral since tragedy too, alone among the arts, is capable of conveying the kind of pessimistic insight that motivates (or perhaps necessitates) ascetic resignation.

4. Moral Consciousness and the Path to Salvation

Schopenhauer conceives of the difference between the virtuous and vicious agents as metaphysical. He claims that the egoist is deeply immersed in metaphysical illusion, whereas the virtuous possess insight into the fundamental truth that everyone's real self is identical with everyone else's real self. Schopenhauer expresses this in a formula he takes from the Upanishads: *tat tvam asi* (this art thou). So virtue is derived from metaphysical insight; viciousness from error or blindness.

The egoist inhabits the natural standpoint, from which the agent "makes himself the centre of the world and considers his own existence and well-being before everything else" (WWR I, 332). Schopenhauer explains this in terms of the will. In a certain sense, the egoist finds himself alone to be a manifestation of the will. This may be taken to mean that the egoist is directly aware only of his own will. Though I may, by analogy with myself, attribute thoughts, feelings, suffering, desiring, and so forth to others, the only desires and thoughts that I actually experience are my own. The egoist thus inhabits a solipsistic universe in which he assumes that he alone is a "real person" (WWR I, 104).

The fundamental imperative of morality is: "Neminem laede, immo omnes, quantum potes, iuva" – "Hurt no one, rather help everyone as much as you can" (BM, 69). This dictum indicates Schopenhauer's conception of the fundamental concept of ethics: compassion. In Schopenhauer's view, morality has its "roots in natural compassion. But this itself is an undeniable fact of human consciousness, is essential to it, and does

not depend on presuppositions, concepts, religions, dogmas, myths, training and education. On the contrary it is original and immediate, it resides in human nature itself and, for this very reason, it endures in all circumstances and appears in all countries at all times" (BM, 44). Compassion is an "immediate *participation*" in the suffering of others. Schopenhauer regards this natural human capacity as "essentially astonishing, indeed mysterious . . . it is the great mystery of ethics, the boundary mark beyond which only metaphysical speculation can venture to step" (BM, 144). Hence Schopenhauer ultimately regards the foundation of morality not as a "problem of *ethics*, but rather, like everything that exists *as such*, of *metaphysics*" (BM, 144–45). Just as art involves a miraculous transcendence of ordinary consciousness, so compassion involves a transcendence of the natural standpoint of egoism. Given that egoistic action is the norm of human behavior, the question arises as to how compassion is possible. That is, how is it possible "for *another's* weal and woe to move my will immediately, that is to say, in exactly the same way as it is usually moved only by my own?" (BM, 143). He describes compassion itself as:

> the immediate *participation*, independent of all ulterior considerations, primarily in the *suffering* of another, and thus in the prevention or elimination of it; for all satisfaction and well-being and happiness consists in this . . . As soon as this compassion is aroused, the weal and woe of another are nearest to my heart in exactly the same way, although not always in exactly the same degree, as otherwise are only my own. Hence the difference between him and me is now no longer absolute.
>
> (BM, 144)

Schopenhauer's claim that in compassion we experience directly other's suffering is at the core of his conception of compassion, and it is that for which his metaphysics provides a putative explanation. He argues from moral phenomena to their primary phenomena and then seeks to provide a metaphysical explanation of those phenomena. He rejects a psychological explanation of how it is possible for one person to experience directly another's suffering. In particular, he argues against the naturalistic claim (found, for example, in Hume) that compassionate agents are motivated by another's suffering, since they *imagine* themselves in the position of the sufferer and have the idea that they are suffering that person's pain in their own person. Schopenhauer claims that "this is by no means the case; on the contrary, at every moment we remain clearly conscious that *he* is the sufferer, not *we*; and it is precisely *in his* person, not in ours, that we feel the suffering, to our sorrow. We suffer *with* him and hence *in* him; we feel his pain as *his*, and do not imagine that it is ours" (BM, 147). This experience of another's pain cannot be explained psychologically; it can be explained only metaphysically.

Schopenhauer's theory of compassion is embedded in his metaphysics, and in particular his revision of Kant's notion of the thing-in-itself. In what to many has seemed a genuine advance on Kant's agnosticism regarding things-in-themselves, Schopenhauer argues that since the intuitions of space and time are merely the forms of our experience and do not have any application at the level of the thing-in-itself, noumenal reality must be one.[2] It is only in our spatio-temporally structured experience, that the world *appears* divided into separate individuals. Hence although we ordinarily think of

ourselves in terms of our private egos, this is an illusion. An awareness of this has dawned on the moral person who identifies with the interests of others. That is the metaphysical explanation of compassion: "according to the true nature of things everyone has all the sufferings of the world as his own" (WWR I, 353). Thus it is possible for compassion to extend to the totality of suffering, in the infinite past and the infinite future; this is an experience which Schopenhauer cites as a possible precursor of pessimistic insight and resignation or the denial of the will.

> Recognizing in all beings his own true and innermost self, the [compassionate agent] must also regard the endless sufferings of all that lives as his own, and thus take upon himself the pain of the whole world. No suffering is any longer strange or foreign to him. All the miseries of others, which he sees and is so seldom able to alleviate, all the miseries of which he has indirect knowledge, and even those he recognizes merely as possible, affect his mind as do his own . . . Wherever he looks he sees suffering humanity and the suffering animal world, and a world that passes away . . . Now how could he, with such knowledge of the world, affirm this very life? . . . The will now turns away from life; it shudders at the pleasures in which it recognizes the affirmation of life.
>
> (WWR I, 379)[3]

In Schopenhauer's view, virtue or compassion constitutes the penultimate step on "the road to salvation." It comes as no surprise, then, that he should regard the fourth and final book of *The World as Will and Representation* as the most "serious." Virtue, Schopenhauer says, is "practical mysticism" in that it "springs from the same knowledge that constitutes the essence of all mysticism" (BM, 212), viz., the truth of the underlying unity of all things. This is why Schopenhauer says that virtue is nothing but his metaphysics translated into action, that it proceeds from "the immediate and intuitive knowledge of the metaphysical identity of all beings" (WWR II, 600).

But Schopenhauer explicitly opposes those philosophico-religious traditions which identify virtue with salvation. The moral virtues, as Schopenhauer has defined them, are not the end of human existence, but merely a step in the direction of that end, namely, the complete abolition of the self or denial of the will. In speaking of the saint, Schopenhauer says "he sees himself in all places simultaneously and withdraws . . . In other words it is no longer enough for him to love others as himself, and to do as much for them as for himself" (WWR I, 380). This is because, in Schopenhauer's understanding, the saint, realizes the futility of alleviating an individual's desires and suffering. What he realizes is that "ceaseless efforts to banish suffering achieve nothing more than a change in its form" (WWR I, 315). With this realization one withdraws from life and the world. One undergoes a "conversion" (WWR II, 612).

What we require then in order to be "saved" is a complete transformation of our mind and nature. It is perhaps only here, in the final stage of the unfolding of Schopenhauer's system, that we come to see *The World as Will and Representation* as "a religious book" (Murdoch 2003, 72). The fourth book completes what Gerard Mannion (2003, 84) aptly calls the "soteriological grand narrative" of Schopenhauer's philosophy and "the denial of the will is its central theme" (Malter, 1988, 63).

One question that immediately arises in this connection is whether denial of the will is something one can will. Schopenhauer appears to deny this, since he talks of "those

in whom the will has turned and denied itself" and says denial of willing "is not to be forcibly arrived at by intention or design . . . it comes suddenly, as if flying in from without" (WWR I, 404). Schopenhauer compares this to Luther's doctrine that there can be no salvation through works of love, "but only faith appearing through the effect of grace" (WWR II, 607). There are apparently two routes to the turning of the will against itself. One is saintly compassion, whereby the will is quietened owing to the saint's overwhelming compassion for others and corresponding indifference to his own interests. The other is to undergo such intense suffering that one's will collapses. Buddhists claim that one becomes a Buddhist when suffering becomes intolerable.[4] Schopenhauer seems to have appropriated this idea in his account of the causal genesis of resignation. What he has in mind, I think, is the notion of a pain- or misery-threshold as a designation for the point at which one state of being passes into another.

Those in whom the will has turned attain a state of "true composure, and complete will-lessness." Schopenhauer asks us to imagine the blissful state of aesthetic contemplation and then to imagine it prolonged; such is the state of will-less self-denial that it is the only genuine salvation for humanity. Since our embodied existence as striving individuals is one we would be better off without, the next best thing is to achieve a condition which involves the lowest possible degree of individuality and desire.

5. Concluding Remarks

We have seen that, for Schopenhauer, the same source of aesthetic value, moral goodness, and the denial of the will is a cognition in which, to varying degrees, the "veil of maya has become transparent" (WWR I, 373). Schopenhauer claims that in aesthetic experience the object is not apprehended through the lens of the *principium individuationis* and so the object of aesthetic attention is not an individual but rather the "Platonic Idea" of the species of the particular thing it is. Similarly, he claims that an individual possessing good character sees through the *principium individuationis* and "cognizes immediately, and without inferences, that the being in itself of his own appearance is also that of others, namely, that will to life which constitutes the inner nature of everything, and lives in all; indeed, he recognizes that this extends even to animals and to the whole of nature; he will therefore not cause suffering even to animals" (WWR I, 572). Schopenhauer holds that this cognition admits of degrees of clarity. It appears that the veil of maya becomes fully transparent only to the ascetic; that this person has the clearest cognition of the metaphysical unity of will, and this "knowledge of the whole, of the inner nature of the thing-in-itself . . . becomes the *quieter* of all and every willing. . . . Man attains to the state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true composure, and complete will-lessness" (WWR I, 379). It appears that the subject of aesthetic experience perceives this unity to the extent of overcoming the illusory division between subject and object; that the moral person perceives this unity to the extent of not causing others suffering, and seeking to relieve others' suffering; while the ascetic resigns the whole attempt to eliminate suffering in a world that is doomed to suffer from its very nature as will. There is thus a correlation in Schopenhauer's metaphysical explanations of these modes of experience between the degree of accuracy of the particular cognition involved and the state's attendant soteriological

value. In effect, Schopenhauer reasons that the closer one comes to knowing the basic truth of things the closer to salvation one moves. But the soteriological value of these states ultimately derives not from their approximation to the truth but rather from their issuing in the individual subject's release from the torment of being individual embodiment of will. Ultimately, the value of art and morality for Schopenhauer derive from their status as a kind of signpost to the higher condition of asceticism. The contemplation of art and the ensuing temporary silencing of the ego, along with the experience of compassion, show that there is attainable for human beings a state that is free from the domination of the will and the evil that attends all egoism and strife. Art and morality, in other words, point to the state in which our true salvation consists – permanent nothingness.

See also 6 Schopenhauer's Philosophy of the Dark Origin; 7 The Consistency of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics; 12 Schopenhauer's Theory of Architecture; 13 The Artist as Subject of Pure Cognition; 14 Schopenhauer on Tragedy and the Sublime; 25 Schopenhauer's Fairy Tale about Fichte: The Origin of *The World as Will and Representation* in German Idealism.

Notes

1 Numbers are, perhaps, individuals but not spatio-temporal, and so constitute one possible counterexample to Schopenhauer's view on this matter.

2 One could add to this criticism of Kant that since "plurality" is a category, and the categories have no application to things-in-themselves, predicating plurality to the noumenal realm entails an inconsistency in Kant's view. But since "unity" is in the table of categories as well, Schopenhauer's claim that the noumenal is "one" seems equally incoherent.

3 It is in virtue of this putative connection between universal compassion and pessimism that Nietzsche so vehemently opposes any "ethics of compassion." Such moral systems, in Nietzsche's view, engender a choking "sympathy with all that suffers." "Schopenhauer was consistent enough: compassion negates life and renders it *more deserving of negation* . . . compassion is the *practice* of nihilism" (Nietzsche 1968, 7).

4 Surprisingly, Nietzsche makes similar-sounding claims about suffering: e.g., "only great suffering is the ultimate emancipator of spirit" (Nietzsche 1967, 79).

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Schopenhauer on the Value of Compassion

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Arthur Schopenhauer is the philosopher of compassion (*Mitleid*). He attributed a moral and metaphysical significance to compassion that is without parallel in the Western philosophical tradition. He argued that compassion is the source for all actions possessing moral worth, that all love is compassion, and that compassion is the *Leitmotiv* for individuals who possess a morally good character. Schopenhauer asserted with considerable pride that compassionate agents recognize nonhuman animals as members of the moral community, and by demonstrating the centrality of compassion within a moral life, he saw his moral philosophy as avoiding a crude barbarism of Judeo-Christian morality, one that even intrudes into Western philosophical ethics, including Kant's. In this regard, he delighted in claiming that his moral philosophy shares the enlightened attitudes towards other living creatures found in Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as sharing their high estimation of the importance of compassion in a moral life. He also emphasized the ways in which this kindhearted fellow feeling transforms relationships between individuals, defeating the natural standpoint of egoism, with its exclusive concern for a person's own well-being, by moving people to assume an analogous concern for the well-being of others. He theorized that those who are regularly disposed to compassionate others, morally good people, live in a world essentially different than that experienced by egoistic and malicious characters, who live in a world they find to be indifferent, if not hostile, to their welfare. Everything and everyone are viewed as other, as "Not I," and they live in moral isolation from others. Conversely, compassionate people live in a world that they perceive as homogeneous to their true nature, and they view others as an "I once more" (BM, 212). By grounding his theory of compassion within his metaphysics of will, Schopenhauer also developed a comprehensive account of what he argued was the primary phenomenon (*Urphänomen*) of morally good conduct, an account that serves as the basis for his claim that good people express in their attitudes and conduct the knowledge demonstrated by the most laborious work of the philosopher.

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1. Compassion in Schopenhauer's Oeuvre

Schopenhauer's substantive discussions of compassion are found in his principal work, *The World as Will and Representation*, sections 66 and 67 of the first volume and chapter 47 of the second volume; in his unsuccessful "Prize Essay on the Basis of Morality," from *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*; and sections 110, 114 and 117, in the essay "On Ethics," from the second volume of *Parerga and Paralipomena*. Each of the discussions of compassion cast different lights on that which he regarded as a fundamental incentive for actions. In his principal work, he analyzed compassion presuming his metaphysics of will, and he integrated it into his theory of the denial of the will to life, by claiming that "from the same source from which all goodness, affection, virtue, and nobility of character spring, there ultimately arises also what I call denial of the will to life" (WWR I, 378). This common source for virtue and the denial of the will is a cognition that "penetrates" or "sees through" (*durchschauen*) the *principium individuationis*, space and time, and which reveals, in various degrees, the metaphysical will in all appearances. Thus he averred that the unity of will, the essence of all in the world, is dimly sensed by a righteous person, more clearly cognized by a lovingly kind individual, and is most clearly cognized by an ascetic, for whom "cognition of the whole, the inner nature of the thing in itself . . . becomes the quieter of all and every willing" (WWR I, 379). He utilized frequently one of the *mahāvākyas* or great pronouncements from the *Chandogya Upanishad*, "*tat tvam asi* [this art thou]" to characterize the content of this cognition in which "the veil of *māyā*," illusion, becomes transparent (WWR I, 374). Yet it is odd that Schopenhauer spent more time analyzing the phenomenon of weeping, which he claimed was "compassion for ourselves" than he did examining the nature of compassion per se. It is also in his principal work that he first advanced the provocative, and what he called a paradoxical claim, that "All love (*ἀγάπη* [agape], *caritas*) is compassion" (WWR I, 374). His treatment of compassion in *Parerga and Paralipomena* is rather thin, made within a general historical review of theories of virtues and vices, and it is most noteworthy in the various connections and oppositions he detailed between envy, *Schadenfreude*, and compassion as responses to the misfortune and good fortunes of others.

Schopenhauer's most robust and fruitful treatment of compassion is found in "On the Basis of Morality" which was written in response to the following question posed in 1837 by the Royal Danish Society of Scientific Studies for a prize essay contest: "Are the source and foundation of morals to be looked for in an idea of morality lying immediately in consciousness (or conscience) and in the analysis of the other fundamental moral concepts springing from that idea, or are they to be looked for in a different ground of knowledge?" (BM, 215). Despite being the only entry, Schopenhauer did not receive the prize because the Royal Danish Society judged that Schopenhauer neither demonstrated that compassion was the basis of morality, nor that it was an adequate foundation for morality. They also falsely accused him of relegating to an appendix that which should have been central to the essay, a discussion of the connection between metaphysics and ethics. Lastly, the Society also mentioned that it was offended by his treatment of "several distinguished philosophers of recent times" (BM, 216), referring to his treatment of Kant, Fichte and Hegel (although Schopenhauer thought that the

Society referred only to his treatment of Fichte and Hegel). In this essay, among other things, Schopenhauer argued that compassion is one of the fundamental or basic incentives for human action and the source of all actions possessing moral worth. He also tried to demonstrate that compassion is the basis of the cardinal virtues of justice and loving kindness or philanthropy (*Menschenliebe*). He also carefully analyzed the nature of compassion; he argued that it is the *leitmotif* for virtuous or morally good people; and he ultimately provided a metaphysical grounding or explanation for compassion. I will focus on Schopenhauer's work in this unsuccessful prize essay, although I will draw from his other writings, including his *Nachlaß* and letters.

2. Schopenhauer's Method of Ethics and Rejection of Moral Skepticism

In "On the Basis of Morality," Schopenhauer developed an empirically based and descriptive ethics. His method of ethics is relatively straightforward:

> The purpose of ethics is to indicate, explain, and trace to its ultimate ground the extremely varied behavior of humans from a moral point of view. Therefore, there is no other way for discovering the foundations of ethics [*Fundaments der Ethik*] than the empirical, namely, to investigate whether there are generally any actions to which we must attribute *genuine moral worth*. Such actions will be actions of voluntary justice, pure philanthropy, and real magnanimity. These are then to be regarded as a given phenomenon that we have to explain correctly, i.e., trace to its true grounds. Consequently, we have to indicate the peculiar incentive [*Triebfeder*] that moves humans to actions of this kind, which is specifically different from any others. This incentive together with the susceptibility to it will be the ultimate ground of morality and knowledge of it will be the foundation of morals [*Fundament der Moral*]. This is the humble path to which I direct ethics; it contains no construction a priori, no absolute legislation for all rational beings *in abstracto* . . . [T]he foundation of morals, that is reached on my path is upheld by experience, which daily and hourly affords its silent testimony in favor thereof.
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> (BM, 130)

Schopenhauer's "humble path to ethics" was stated in opposition to what he saw as the pretentiousness of Kant's ethics. Prior to stating his empirical method of ethics, he had spent over one third of his "On the Basis of Morality" vigorously and harshly criticizing Kant's practical philosophy, which he categorically rejected. Pure reason, as Kant thought, cannot discover *a priori* the basis of ethics just as little as it can become practical, he argued. Even Kant's categorical imperative, his supreme principle of morality, said to state unconditional moral obligations that are binding on all rational beings, despite their inclinations, Schopenhauer viewed as only hypothetical imperatives if they were to provide motives for human actions. That is, the imperative "you ought to tell the truth" will not motivate unless it is contingently related to an agent's desire. In that case, it is hypothetical; that is, "if you desire to be trusted, then you ought to tell the truth." If an agent desires to be trusted, then, and only then, will the agent tell the truth (see BM, 88–94 and Cartwright 1999, 254–63). Schopenhauer's empirical and

a posteriori ethics will first attempt to establish that there are actions possessing moral worth. Then he will attempt to discover the type of ultimate incentive that moves agents to perform actions of this kind as well as that which makes agents susceptible or sensitive to this incentive for morally praiseworthy actions. By doing this, Schopenhauer claimed that he will uncover the ultimate ground of morality. As John E. Atwell has noted:

> Knowledge of this truth will be the basis of morals, that is the basis of the ethical discipline or *Wissenschaft* that puts forth and defends the aforecited fact [compassion as the real ground of morality]. In short, morality (*die Moralität*) belongs to practice, and morals (*die Moral*) belongs to theory.
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> (Atwell 1990, 77–78)

To establish whether there are acts of voluntary justice, pure philanthropy and real magnanimity, actions to which we attribute moral worth, Schopenhauer confronted moral skepticism, the view "that there cannot be a natural morality, in other words, one based merely on the nature of things or of humans" (BM, 121). He read the moral skeptic as advocating psychological egoism, the view that all human actions are self-interested, that is, aimed at the well-being of the actor. Since Schopenhauer accepted the Kantian claim that all self-interested actions lack moral worth, the truth of psychological egoism would demonstrate that there are no morally worthwhile actions, which would entail that ethics would be a science without a subject, like "alchemy and astrology" (BM, 139). From the standpoint of the moral skeptic, actions to which we attribute moral worth, altruistic actions that aim to promote another's well-being, are only apparently altruistic. The deeper explanation of such conduct is the product of human institutions that restrain and redirect human self-interest-seeking by threats of law, the fear of the loss of reputation or the prospects of either eternal reward or divine punishment. In other words, what moves people to keep a contract or pledge is fear of legal punishment; what moves a person to be honest is the fear of loss of reputation and social ostracism; and what moves a person to help another is hope for divine reward or fear of divine damnation. The dear self stands behind all conduct.

One might anticipate that Schopenhauer would have embraced psychological egoism, since some form of motivational monism, the view that there is some single motive that ultimately accounts for all human conduct, would have been compatible with his metaphysical monism. Psychological egoism would appear to be the most likely candidate for this motive, since he also held that egoism is the chief and fundamental incentive for all cognizant beings, humans and nonhuman animals, each one of which desires continued existence, freedom from pain, and pleasure. Egoism is, he argued, the "natural standpoint," since from a phenomenological perspective, "each individual is immediately given to himself as the whole will and the entire representer, all others are given to him in the first instance only as his representations. Hence for him his own inner being and its preservation come before all others taken together" (WWR I, 332). For these reasons, Schopenhauer advocated that "as a rule . . . all human actions spring from egoism, and we must first try to explain an action with this in mind" (BM, 131). Nevertheless, this statement functions simply as a general rule for Schopenhauer and not as the categorical claim advocated by the proponent of psychological egoism;

namely, that each and every human action is egoistic. Because of this general rule, he was willing to concede that much that passes as righteous and virtuous conduct is self-interested, often motivated by fear of legal sanctions, fear of social condemnation, or fear of divine retribution. Yet he held that there were "indubitable cases" of acts of voluntary justice and disinterested philanthropy (BM, 126). Thus, he mentioned cases in which nonreligious people who, without fear of being detected, or even of being suspected, had they done something wrong, instead, do the right thing; for example, a poor man returning lost property to a rich man. Then there is his paradigm case of a magnanimous action, the heroic sacrifice of Arnold von Winkelried who, at the Battle of Sempach (1386), "clasped in his arms as many hostile spears as he could grasp" (BM, 139). By sacrificing his life, Winkelried saved the lives of many of his comrades and inspired them to defeat the Austrians.

Of course, Schopenhauer's examples of allegedly altruistic actions have been challenged. His onetime self-described student and later self-designated "antipode," Friedrich Nietzsche, questioned his paradigm case. In reference to a case like Winkelried's sacrifice, Nietzsche wrote: "All he is really concerned with, therefore, is the discharge of his emotion; to relieve his state of tension he seizes the spears of his enemies and buries them into his own flesh" (Nietzsche 1986, 74). This action is egoistic, Nietzsche claimed, because Winkelried's action had as its end the escape from a distressing emotional state and not the well-being of his comrades, although this also followed from his sacrifice. Schopenhauer, however, anticipated such imaginative critics: "Some may imagine that he [Winkelried] had a selfish intent, but I cannot" (BM, 139). To such critics, those who refuse to recognize altruistic actions, Schopenhauer ends his conversation and addresses only those who admit of their reality.

Although Schopenhauer's reply seems blunt and to beg the question, it was a reasonable move on his part. Psychological egoism may appear to be parsimonious, but its economy seems suspect, given the elastic and fungible nature of its explanations. One could imagine that Winkelried sacrificed himself to gain a legendary reputation, or to avoid harsh criticism of his military tactics, or to demonstrate his bravery and to thereby shame his soldiers, or to demonstrate his contempt for death, or to escape a miserable life under Austrian domination. The tergiversations by the egoist seem to be endless. Schopenhauer realized, moreover, that the empirical question of whether there are altruistic actions could not be established conclusively, since "there is always left the possibility that an egoistic motive had influenced the doer of a just or good action" (BM, 138). He was also prepared to admit the fallibility of introspective reports of motivation, even to the extent of recognizing that besides valorizing ignoble motives, sometimes we attribute a less noble for purer and nobler incentive, such as explaining an act of direct love for one's neighbor as being "explained only by the command of God" (BM, 138). Like Kant, Schopenhauer recognized that the "dear self" could be lurking behind any action to which we (wrongly) attribute moral worth, but unlike Kant, who was untroubled by this possibility, since he was not concerned with what has happened as a matter of fact, but with "what ought to happen" (Kant 1964, 75), Schopenhauer was committed to an empirical ethics that explains what happens, and he found it not unreasonable to believe, as with many others, that humans can act nonegoistically and ultimately for the benefit of another. In Schopenhauer's defense, it should also be noted that psychological egoism has not been established conclusively by philosophers or

social scientists, and some social psychologists have shown problems with some simple forms of egoism (Batson et. al., 1988, 1991). Recently, the philosopher Elliott Sober and the biologist David Sloan Wilson (1998) have made a forceful case that motivational pluralism, including both egoistic and altruistic motives, is more probable than psychological egoism as an outcome of the evolutionary process.

3. The Moral Point of View

Having put the issue of moral skepticism behind him, Schopenhauer proceeds to group human actions into three classes; namely, morally indifferent, morally reprehensible and morally worthwhile actions. Unlike Kant, who operates from moral judgments about actions, the voluntaristic Schopenhauer constructs a moral point of view by appealing to the affective responses of the actor and an impartial and uninvolved witness of the same deed. Morally indifferent actions prompt no affective response to the deed by either the doer or witness. An example of this kind of action would be that of a merchant who diligently and straightforwardly caters to customer concerns in order to increase the profitability of the business. The doer of a morally reprehensible action suffers the "sting of conscience," a feeling of disapprobation and the action also provokes a feeling of disapprobation in the witness. An example of this type of action would be that of the winner of a fight who "tore away the whole lower jawbone of [the loser], and carried it off as a trophy, leaving the other man still alive" (BM, 169). An action possessing moral worth elicits, Schopenhauer claimed, a feeling of approbation by both the agent and spectator. An example would be the aforementioned case of a poor man returning lost property to a rich one, or the case of Winkelried – although he would have had this feeling of approbation rather quickly! Curiously, Schopenhauer claimed that this feeling of approbation "affords us the verification . . . of the knowledge that our true self exists not only in our own person, in this particular phenomenon, but in everything that lives," a claim that will function centrally in his metaphysical explanation of compassion (WWR I, 375). It is as if there is a *nexus metaphysicus* that connects all beings.

After classifying actions of different moral values, Schopenhauer raised the question concerning what moves individuals to perform actions of these kinds. Employing claims that he had established in *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, he asserted that actions are a function of a sufficient motive operating on a person's character and that actions follow from this motive with the same necessity by which an effect follows a cause. All actions are intentional, he held, and have as their ultimate end something "in agreement with or contrary to a will" (BM, 141). By identifying "things in agreement with a will" with a being's weal or well-being (*Wohl*) and "things contrary to a will" with a being's woe or misfortune (*Wehe*), he concluded that all actions have as their ultimate end "a being susceptible to weal and woe" (BM, 141). Since Schopenhauer held that this being is either the doer of the deed or another affected by it, he detailed four ultimate ends of actions; namely, the agent's own weal; the agent's own woe (which he did not discuss in his prize essay, because it was written in the spirit of ethics prevailing in Europe, and he thought that its judges would not understand, see WWR II, 607n.); another's weal; and another's woe. For any agent,

the cognition of these ends are motives and whether a particular motive becomes a sufficient motive depends on a person's character, which Schopenhauer viewed as ultimately reducible to an amalgam of four basic incentives: egoism, a desire for an agent's own well-being; an unnamed incentive, a desire for an agent's own woe (which he did not discuss in BM, but see his letter to Johann August Becker, December 10, 1844, in Hübscher 1987, 221, where he claims that this incentive has ascetic value); compassion, a desire for another's weal; and malice, a desire for another's woe. Each person, Schopenhauer claimed, is susceptible to these incentives to different degrees, and each incentive has different degrees of strength, comparable to the range of intensity between the most feeble and most intense rays of light. He also held that actions can proceed from a combination of these incentives.

With his inventory of fundamental incentives at hand, Schopenhauer argued that compassion is the source of actions possessing moral worth. He did this first through an argument by elimination. Morally praiseworthy actions cannot have egoism as their source, since egoism aims at an agent's own well-being and morally worthwhile actions aim at another's well-being. They also cannot be due to malice, since malice aims at another's woe. (Schopenhauer's treatment of malice is curious. He recognized that like compassion, it is nonegoistic, but he never worries about the existence of actions resulting from malice like he did of those resulting from compassion. The advocate of psychological egoism, of course, would deny that any action is not self-interested.) And although he did not discuss the unnamed incentive in "On the Basis of Morality," he could have easily eliminated this incentive as the source of morally worthwhile actions, since it aims at the agent's own woe and he held that "the moral significance of an action can lie only in its reference to others" (BM, 142). The unnamed incentive, like egoism, is ultimately self-referring. By eliminating three of the four basic incentives as the bases of morally worthwhile actions, he concluded that compassion is the source of these actions. Egoism is the source of morally indifferent actions, and malice is the source of morally reprehensible actions (BM, 145). The unnamed incentive is the incentive for the denial of the will (see Hübscher 1987, 221).

Schopenhauer provided, however, more than an argument from elimination to support his claim that "only insofar as an action has sprung from compassion does it have moral value" (BM, 144). He also argued that it is the source of the virtues of justice and loving kindness or philanthropy. Since he held that these are the cardinal virtues, that all virtues "follow practically and may be derived theoretically" from them, by showing how these virtues are based on compassion, he thought he would have demonstrated how all virtues stem from compassion (BM, 148). Although Schopenhauer rejected the claim that moral principles are basic in our moral lives, he proposed a moral principle, "Neminem laede, imo omnes, quantum potes, juva [Injure no one; on the contrary, help everyone as much as you can]," which serves simply to summarize the lines of conduct to which moral worth is attributed. "Neminem laede" summarizes the lines of conduct expressed by a righteous person, one who possesses the virtue of justice, and "omnes, quantum potes, juva" summarizes the lines of conduct expressed by the behavior of a philanthropic person, one who possesses the virtue of loving kindness.

Schopenhauer held that compassion admits of degrees, as do the other incentives. Some individuals are more compassionate than others. In other words, some people are

more sensitive and responsive to the woes of others than other compassionate people. Righteous individuals, those who express the virtue of justice, refrain from acting in a way that would harm another; that is, when they realize that something that they plan to do would injure another, the prospects of the other's woe elicits their compassion, which prevents them from doing as they originally planned. As he put it:

> the first degree of the effect of compassion is that it opposes and impedes the suffering which I intend to cause others by my own inherent antimoral forces [egoism, malice]. It calls out to me "Stop!;" it stands before the other person like a bulwark, protecting that person from the injury that my egoism or malice would otherwise urge me to do.
>
> (BM, 149)

Thus he claimed that a righteous person would not steal, cause another physical or psychological harm, satisfy carnal desires by seducing another's spouse, keep lost property, lie, or break contracts, because these actions would harm others.

Since compassion only restrains righteous individuals from engaging in wrongful conduct, conduct that would injure another, he called it the first degree of compassion and a "negative" expression of compassion, since it inhibits a person from engaging in an action that would have harmed another (BM, 149). The second degree and a "positive" expression of compassion is manifest in the behavior of philanthropic or loving-kind individuals. It represents a higher degree of compassion and it is "positive," since compassion moves agents to do something to relieve another's woe. Depending on the nature of another's distress and the strength of compassion found in a person's character, philanthropic individuals are moved to make a lesser or greater sacrifice to aid others, which "may consist in an expenditure of my bodily and mental powers on his behalf in the loss of property, health, freedom, and even life itself" (BM, 163). In this form of compassion, he argued, another's suffering directly becomes the agent's motive and the agent treats this woe as normally he or she would treat his or her own; that is, the agent acts to relieve it. This phenomenon, he said, is not something requiring reflection and argumentation to move the agent; it involves an immediate participation in the other's woe, something that can be described as "even [an] instinctive participation in another's suffering" (BM, 163). Actions following from this form of compassion are summarized by the maxim, "Omnes, quantum potes, juva [Help everyone as much as you can]" (BM, 163). It is the source, he also claimed, of both *caritas* and *ἀγάπη* (*agape*).

Schopenhauer's reduction of love to compassion (*Mitleid*) has been challenged. Max Scheler took him to task by arguing that it is impossible to account for love by appealing to any fellow feeling, including compassion. Strongly influenced by Nietzsche's analysis of *Mitleid*, Scheler argued that without love for the recipient, ". . . the expression of pity (*Mitleid*) for him will be felt, even by the pitier himself (if he is morally sensitive) to be an act of brutality. If he cannot at the same time love that whom he pities, the sensitive man will hide his feeling of compassion [*Mitleid*]" (Scheler 1973, 143). Scheler's point is that to pity another without love injures the patient's pride, shaming and humiliating this person, and a morally sensitive person would hide pity to spare the other shame. For Scheler, *Mitleid* is always reactive and it is possible to have it for those we do not love. Even when love accompanies *Mitleid*, he thought, it is love that makes it bearable for its recipient, although this form of love only values its object as an instance of a

generalized object, "sufferer," "humankind," "family member," "member of a class," and not as a unique individual, valuable in his or her own right. Love, Scheler contended, is active and not reactive as is *Mitleid*, which is always a response to another's woe, and love recognizes a particular individual's intrinsic value, whether he or she suffers or not.

Although Scheler's analysis of *Mitleid* is insightful at a number of levels, I believe that this is the case if he is referring to pity and not compassion. While either "pity" or "compassion" is a proper translation of the German noun *Mitleid*, I have argued elsewhere that "compassion" and not "pity" is the proper translation of Schopenhauer's use of the term *Mitleid*, and that there are morally important differences between compassion and pity (see Cartwright 1988). Yet, however we translate this term, Scheler is correct to say that love is distinct from compassion. Certainly, if you love someone, it is likely that you will have compassion for that person, but you can have compassion for someone you do not love. Scheler also seems correct to note that love is not simply a reaction to another's potential or actual woe, which is always the case with compassion. Schopenhauer, moreover, did not offer much of an argument for his claim that all love is compassion. All that he did was note that the tones, words, and caresses of pure love entirely coincide with the tone of compassion, and "it may be observed also that compassion and pure love are expressed in Italian by the same word, *pietá*" (WWR I, 376).

Schopenhauer seems to have reduced love to compassion because he viewed both as a nonegoistic desire for another's well-being, and he viewed this desire as no more than a desire to prevent or relieve another's woe. That is, he defined the incentive of compassion as a desire for another's weal, and he did so because he has a negative view of weal, enjoyment, pleasure and the like:

> pain, suffering that includes all want, privation, need, in fact, every wish or desire, is *that which is positive and directly felt and experienced*. On the other hand, the nature of satisfaction, enjoyment, and happiness consists solely in the removal of a privation, the stilling of a pain; and so these have a *negative* effect.
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> (BM, 146)

Thus, if one were to claim that love is distinct from compassion, since compassion is a response to another's woe and love involves a desire to promote another's well-being in cases in which there is no woe to relieve, then Schopenhauer would reply that there is no simple positive state of well-being to promote; it is always the relief of misery. In Schopenhauer's world, there is no rejoicing with another because there is no joy to have with another. There is only suffering to have with another; that is, there is no *Mitfreude*, since there is no *Freude*, but there is *Mitleid*, because there is *Leid*.

Schopenhauer's derivation of the virtues of justice and loving kindness also suffers the same problem as his reduction of love to a form of compassion, even if one agrees with him, as did William Frankena (1973, 65), that these are the cardinal virtues. Schopenhauer was able to derive justice and loving kindness from compassion because he viewed the former as only preventing suffering and the latter as only relieving suffering. But is the virtue of justice simply a disposition not to act in a way that does not harm others, as Schopenhauer would have it? Or is it a disposition not to act in a way

that leads others to suffer unfairly? Could a disposition to treat another justly involve injuring another? Schopenhauer himself was willing to recognize the slogan "Give to each his own" as a maxim of justice (BM, 153), and sometimes this notion of desert entails that one deserves ill. Even Schopenhauer's justification of legal punishment recognizes that sometimes treating a person justly involves injuring another deservedly (see WWR I, 347–49). Sometimes just actions cause woe, in the case of punishment, and sometimes they do not prevent woe. Moreover, in so far as Schopenhauer regarded honesty, paying back debts, and keeping promises as just actions, we could think of situations in which agents perform such actions, not out of self-interest, and in which the failure to do so would not cause any form of suffering that a compassionate agent would seek to prevent. For example, one of Schopenhauer's paradigm cases of a just action involves a poor person returning lost property to a rich man (BM, 126). We could imagine the poor person doing so fully realizing that its owner is so rich that he does not even miss the lost property, but he returns it because it belongs to another.

The same difficulty can also be found in Schopenhauer's analysis of loving kindness. While there can be little doubt that to treat another with loving kindness sometimes involves relieving another's woe, but like love itself, it can also be expressed by making one who is already well-off become better-off. For example, I may know that Arthur appreciates a good cigar and because of my high regard for him, I give him my last Cuban. I do this because I value Arthur and I regard his enjoyment as a good to be promoted. It is not as if Arthur is suffering tobacco withdrawal and my act of kindness is to relieve his woe. Nor is it the case that Arthur knows that I possess a fine cigar and he longs passionately to smoke it, and I set about to still his distress. That is, Schopenhauer appears to ignore the way in which philanthropic actions make an already good state of affairs better and how such actions reflect the view that the other's well-being is important in its own right and is worthy to be promoted.

4. The Nature of Compassion

Although I have argued that Schopenhauer failed to demonstrate that compassion is the source of the cardinal virtues of justice and loving kindness and that he failed to demonstrate that it is the basis of all actions possessing moral worth, I also believe that he did show its intimate connection to some just and philanthropic acts. But behind his attempt to derive these virtues from compassion is a profoundly deep understanding of the nature of this fellow feeling. Central to his view of compassion is that it is a response to another's potential or actual suffering and that compassion involves treating another's woe as normally as one treats one's own – one is disposed to act to prevent or eliminate it. Schopenhauer raised exactly the right question here by asking how it is possible for us to treat another's woe as we treat our own. In answering this question, he presented his conception of compassion.

Schopenhauer argued that compassionate agents come to treat another's woe as their own,

> only through the other person becoming *the ultimate object* of my will in the same way I myself otherwise am, and hence through my directly desiring *his* weal and not *his* woe just

> as immediately as I ordinarily do only *my own*. But this necessarily presupposes that, in the case of his *woe* as such I suffer directly with him [*ich geradezu mit leide*], I feel *his* woe just as I ordinarily feel only my own . . . But this requires that I am in some way *identified with him*, in other words, that this entire *difference* between me and everyone else, which is the very basis of my egoism, is eliminated, to a certain extent at least . . . However, the process here analyzed is not one that is imagined or invented; on the contrary, it is perfectly real and indeed by no means infrequent. It is the everyday phenomenon of *compassion*, of the immediate *participation* [*Teilnahme*], independent of all ulterior considerations, primarily in the *suffering* of another, and thus in the prevention or elimination of it; for all satisfaction and well being and happiness consist in this.
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> (BM, 143–44)

Schopenhauer's conception of compassion can be detailed by the following analytical model, which I have presented in an altered form elsewhere (Cartwright 1982, 63):

A has compassion for B, if and only if
i) A and B are sentient beings;
ii) A cognizes that B will be or is suffering;
iii) A feels sorrow for B;
iv) A participates immediately in B's suffering;
v) A desires B's well-being; and
vi) A is disposed to prevent or eliminate B's suffering, and other things being equal, A will act to prevent or eliminate B's suffering.

With the exception of iv), the features he attributed to compassion are relatively uncontroversial and straightforward. Before I turn to his claim that A participates immediately in B's suffering, I will make some brief supporting remarks for the other five features.

Condition i), that compassion is a relationship between sentient beings, is uncontroversial. One could not have compassion for a mountain, nor could a mountain have it for you; nor could you have compassion for a rose or a rose for you. Nonsentient beings lack both the cognitive and affective capacities to be an agent or patient for this fellow feeling. It would be an extreme form of anthropomorphism to think that members of inorganic nature and the plant kingdom could suffer or respond to suffering. But, because nonhuman animals can suffer, Schopenhauer includes them as patients of compassion, and a novel feature of his view is that he held that higher nonhuman animals can be compassionate agents (BM, 151). That compassion involves some type of cognition of another's suffering, condition ii), also seems uncontroversial. To respond compassionately to another requires some recognition of another and that the other will be or is suffering. It would also appear that compassion must involve the cognition of another's suffering and that it would be misplaced to have compassion for another's happiness, unless it portended the other's future suffering. For example, it is not the drunk's euphoric state that I compassionate, but it is for the terrible cost and toil it is taking on his liver and the future suffering the drunk will face because of this vice. That a compassionate agent is emotionally affected by the other's suffering and that this is something like sorrow, condition iii), is necessary, since compassion must be distinguished from the mere indifferent recognition of suffering, and this response must be

negative in tone, otherwise you have an affective response like *Schadenfreude*. Condition v), that a compassionate agent desires the patient's well-being, which is exactly Schopenhauer's description of the incentive of compassion, captures the conative element of compassion, explaining why condition vi) is the case. It is because compassion involves the desire for another's well-being that a compassionate agent is disposed to prevent or relieve suffering. Both of these last two conditions distinguish compassion from sympathy (*Sympathie*) and empathy (*Einfühlung*), which both lack the conation to aid another and can be felt towards either another's joy or pain.

Condition iv), that a compassionate agent participates immediately in another's suffering, is the problematic feature of Schopenhauer's view of the nature of compassion. He rejected any attempt to explain this phenomenon psychologically, and he explicitly repudiated that of the Italian philosopher Ubaldo Cassina, who argued in *Saggio analytico sulla compassione* (1788) that compassion arises from an instantaneous deception of the imagination in which compassionate people put themselves in the position of the sufferer, having the idea that they are suffering the other's pain in their person. Schopenhauer rejected Cassina's claims that compassionate people imagine others' suffering and they experience the others' suffering in their own bodies. Instead, he argued:

> This is no means the case; on the contrary, at every moment we remain clearly conscious that *he* is the sufferer, not *we*; and it is precisely in *his* person, not in ours, that we feel the suffering, to our grief and sorrow. We suffer *with* him and *in* him [*Wir leiden mit ihm, also in ihm*]; we feel his pain as *his*, and do not imagine that it is ours.
>
> (BM, 147)

In rejecting Cassina, Schopenhauer claimed that compassion involves the extraordinary experience of another's pain in the other's body. Due to this extraordinary experience, he called compassion the "great mystery of ethics," and he claimed that it requires a metaphysical explanation (BM, 144). Employing a term that he took from Goethe, he called compassion the primary phenomenon [*Urphänomen*] of morally worthwhile actions; that which explains all such actions but which cannot be explained by any of these actions. Metaphysics provides, he argued, "a final explanation of primary phenomena as such, and, when taken collectively, of the world" (BM, 199).

Schopenhauer did not present any evidence for the existence of this extraordinary experience of another's pain in another's body. How is it possible to experience another's pain in the other's body? It would seem that what makes the experience of pain *my* experience of pain is that I alone immediately experience it, and if this is the case, I cannot have the experience of another's pain. Moreover, if I experience pain and claim to experience this pain in another's body, Cassina is probably correct that this is some sort of deceptive idea. Certainly, I could have an experience of pain like that of another. For example, we may both suffer grief at the loss of the same loved one, or we could have our right legs broken in the same car crash. Yet our pains, while analogous and suffered at the same time, are distinct events. I have argued that an adequate account of compassion does not require this sort of extraordinary experience and that by including it in his analysis of compassion, Schopenhauer cannot derive the virtue of justice from this fellow feeling (Cartwright 1982). Compassion, he argued, inhibits us from doing something that would harm another that would cause another's woe. But, this

woe is in the future and does not exist. If it does not exist, it is impossible for me to feel it in another's body. It would seem that if it is compassion for another's future suffering that moves me not to act in a certain way, it is because I can imagine what the other would feel if I were to act in that way, or I know, based on past experience, that others were harmed when I acted as I planned. Moreover, Schopenhauer recognized what could be called "compassion at a distance," feeling compassion for others beyond one's immediate experience, such as compassionating victims of a natural disaster in some distant land. One could imagine how one would feel in such circumstances to have a sense of their suffering and this could awaken one's compassion and move one to contribute resources for aiding the victims. Schopenhauer, moreover, recognized the role of the imagination in evoking compassion in his analysis of the phenomenon of weeping, which he viewed as the response of "compassion for ourselves" (WWR I, 377), and in his analysis of the means by which righteous people can maintain their resolve to follow principles by reawakening compassion: "Nothing will bring us back to the path of justice so readily as the idea [*Vorstellung*] of the trouble, grief, and lamentation of the loser" (BM, 152). Schopenhauer's account of compassion would be more adequate if he dropped the claim that it involves the agent literally suffering with another by experiencing another's pain in the other's body, and if he viewed the experience of another's woe, in some instances, as something imagined.

5. Metaphysical Explanations of Compassion

When Schopenhauer claimed that compassion involves feeling another's pain in the other's body, he asserted that the explanation of the possibility of this phenomenon "can be arrived at only metaphysically, and in the last section [BM, § 22] I shall attempt to give such as explanation" (BM, 147). However, when one turns to his metaphysical explanation of compassion in that essay, he never explains how this extraordinary experience is possible. Rather, he discusses the differences in behavior between morally good people, those who are strongly disposed to compassion, and morally evil people, those who are strongly disposed to either egoism or malice. Good people, he avers, treat others as an "I once more," and he uses one of the *mah v kyas* or great pronouncements from the *Chandogya Upanishad*, "tat tvam asi [this art thou]" (BM, 210), to describe their behavior; whereas, evil people treat others as "*absolute Not I*" (BM, 211). To motivate his metaphysical explanation, he then raised the question of whose conception of their relationships to others is mistaken and due to a delusion, that belonging to good characters or that belonging to evil characters. He argued that, from a metaphysical perspective, that of evil characters is not warranted, while that of a good people is warranted, since individuality is only an appearance and, metaphysically, everything is an expression of will. Others are an "I once more."

In justifying his claim that the line of conduct expressed by morally good characters is metaphysically warranted, Schopenhauer employed a number of claims found in his first metaphysical explanation of compassion, found in the fourth book of *The World as Will and Representation*. There, he argued that good people "see through [*durchschauen*]" the *principium individuationis*, space and time, and "recognize immediately, and without inferences, that the in itself of [their] own appearance is also that of others, namely

that will-to-live which constitutes the inner nature of everything, and lives in all" (WWR I, 372). Thus, Schopenhauer claims that the veil of *māyā* becomes transparent for virtuous people, and they realize the truth of the great Vedic pronouncement "*Tat tvam asi* ('This art thou!')" (WWR I, 374). It is as if this cognition of the metaphysical unity of will drives the behavior and attitudes of virtuous people, and that they treat the sufferings of others as if it were their own, because they recognize others as themselves.

A number of Schopenhauer's commentators have deduced severe problems with his first metaphysical explanation of compassion. Some (Gardiner 1967, 276f.; Hamlyn 1980, 145; Young 2005, 182f.) have suggested that Schopenhauer reduced compassion to a form of metaphysical egoism; good people treat others well because others are themselves. While rejecting this criticism, John Atwell argued that if the virtuous cognize the thing-in-itself, the will, in another person, they would be more likely to shrink from it in horror than to be compassionate; that "once I delve beneath the surface of things and come face to face with the will-to-live, I am no longer aware of the unfortunate, suffering, hungry beggar (for that is merely phenomenal): I am aware of nothing that might move me to compassion (how could one have compassion for the will-to-live?)" (Atwell 1990, 123). Atwell's point is that this cognition of will precludes compassion (egoism, too), since this cognition erases individuality and all desires for anyone's well-being, those of another (compassion) or one's own (egoism). The metaphysical will is not individualized.

Schopenhauer's first metaphysical explanation of compassion naturally invites the charge that he had reduced compassion to some grand form of metaphysical egoism. If I am moved to help others because I see that I am the other, then it seems that I am ultimately helping myself. By emphasizing that compassionate characters see others as an "I once more," Schopenhauer severely provokes this analysis. But if this cognition is of the metaphysical will in the other, then Atwell's point is well-made. This cognition abrogates individuality, and neither the incentive of compassion nor egoism could operate, since both require the recognition of someone's weal to promote, that of oneself or that of another.

Schopenhauer, however, was aware of the charge that he had reduced compassion to egoism, and he defended himself, in part, by making one of Atwell's points. Johann August Becker, whom Schopenhauer credited with the most thorough understanding of his philosophy among his contemporaries, raised the charge of egoism in one of his letters to the philosopher. Schopenhauer replied to Becker by writing that he might argue that

> compassion, along with all of the virtues flowing from it, are *egoistical* . . . because it depends on the cognition of my own being in another. But this argument rests solely on your wanting to take the phrase, 'I once more', literally, while it is simply a figurative turn of expression. For 'I' in the proper sense of the term refers exclusively to the individual and not to the metaphysical thing in itself which *appears* in individuals, but which is directly unknowable . . . [W]ith regard to this, therefore, the individual ceases and by *egoism* is understood the exclusive interest in one's own individuality.
>
> (Hübscher 1987, 221)

One of the frustrating aspects of reading Schopenhauer is that when he changes or "clarifies" one of his original philosophical claims, instead of clearly announcing such changes or clarifications, he put the burden on the reader to recognize them. For example, in the preface to the first edition of his principal work, he requires the reader to first study its "introduction," that is his dissertation, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (1813), a work that contained a number of claims about which he had changed his mind. Rather than carefully noting these changes, he writes, "the correction of such passages will come about quite automatically in the reader's thoughts through acquaintance with the present work" (WWR I, xiv). This, of course, places a tremendous burden on the shoulders of his readers, especially when he emphasized that a thorough understanding of his philosophy requires reading "every line of me" (WWR I, 461). But unlike his dissertation, which he substantively changed in its second edition (1847), he did not alter the metaphysics of compassion in the third edition of his main work (1859) or in the second edition of the unsuccessful prize essay (1860), both of which appeared after his letter to Becker and his statement of the nonliteral use of the phrase, "I once more." (One can only surmise that by "every line of me" Schopenhauer must have meant even his private correspondence!)

In any case, if he did not want his readers to understand that compassionate people do not literally view others as an "I once more," what did he mean? In "On the Basis of Morality," he continued to use the phrases "I once more" and the Vedic "tat tvam asi" to refer to the behavior of morally good people and in a way that mirrors his analysis of virtue in *The World as Will and Representation*. However, there is also what could be called a second metaphysical explanation of compassion, one that does not entail that virtuous people are moved by some deep cognition into the metaphysical unity of the will. Instead, he described the conduct of the virtuous as showing or expressing in deed and disposition that which is articulated in his philosophy. Thus he claims that good individuals express "practical wisdom" in their behavior and attitudes, which harmonizes perfectly with the "theoretical wisdom" found in the writings of the philosopher; "that is, the just, righteous, beneficent, and magnanimous person, would express by deed that knowledge only which is the result of the greatest intellectual depth and the most laborious investigation of the theoretical philosopher" (BM, 210). Indeed, he was so bold as to assert: "to be just, noble, and benevolent is nothing but to translate my metaphysics into action" (WWR II, 600). He also called the lives of the truly virtuous as expressing "practical mysticism," living a form of life that corresponds to the type of knowledge that "constitutes the essence of all mysticism proper" (BM, 212). It is not that the virtuous have a cognition into the metaphysical unity of all and it is this cognition that motivates virtuous people; rather, they live in a way that correlates to the best findings of philosophy and the insight had by mystics. Ultimately, and to return to Schopenhauer's question, the conduct of good people, those who treat others like themselves, by being moved to treat others' sufferings as their own, and who treat others as an "I once more," live a life that is metaphysically warranted; whereas, the vicious, by treating others as absolute "Not I," express a mode of life that is a metaphysical delusion. In this regard, Schopenhauer's metaphysics justifies his ethics and eludes the charge of grounding his moral philosophy in some metaphysical form of egoism.

See also 8 Schopenhauer on Sex, Love and Emotions; 15 Schopenhauer and the Objectivity of Art.

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18

Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy

DAVID E. COOPER

Even a cursory glance at the indexes to Schopenhauer's writings reveals a very large number of references to Asian religions and philosophies, and to figures, texts and concepts associated with these. While several of these references are to Chinese traditions of thought and to Middle Eastern religions, the great bulk is to Buddhism and to what Schopenhauer calls "Brahmanism." By this term, he has in mind primarily the Vedantic ("end of Veda") corpus of philosophical reflections – above all, the Upanishads, composed during the first millennium BCE – on the original holy texts of Hinduism, the Vedas. It is upon the relationship between these Indian traditions and Schopenhauer's thought that this chapter will focus.

The wealth of Schopenhauer's references to these traditions attests to his considerable familiarity with both the translated Indian texts and the commentaries on these by Western scholars that, over his lifetime, were being published at an accelerating pace. By 1815, moreover, he was acquainted with leading figures in the new field of "orientalism," such as his mother's friend in Weimar, Friedrich Majer. The first volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, published four years later, displays considerable knowledge of Hindu thought, while the second volume, published a quarter of a century later, indicates the author's growing acquaintance, during those years, with Buddhism. While Schopenhauer never attempted to learn Sanskrit or Pali, and never considered himself a scholar of Indian religion and philosophy, his knowledge of these traditions exceeded that of all but a few of his contemporaries.[1]

Many of Schopenhauer's references to Buddhism and Brahmanism also attest to his great admiration for these traditions. His comments on them are rarely less than respectful, and are sometimes dithyrambic. Typical is his description of these religions as "sublime and profound" (WWR II, 643). It is apparent, too, that the importance for Schopenhauer of Indian philosophy was personal and emotional, not merely intellectual. A bust of the Buddha stood in his study, while one of his dogs was named "Atma," after the Sanskrit name for the Self. As early as the age of 17, according to a remark in his autobiographical "Cholerabuch," Schopenhauer seems to have had a powerful and

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moving experience of "the *misery and wretchedness* of life" that he himself compares with that of the young Gotama, the Buddha (MR IV, § 36). Indeed, he is reputed to have later called himself a "Buddha-ist."

His relationship with Hinduism was no less personal. In a famous passage from his "Remarks on Sanskrit Literature," Schopenhauer describes the Upanishads – in the Latin translation by Anquetil-Duperron, the *Oupnekhat*, which he preferred over English and German ones – as "the most profitable and sublime reading of my life." These texts, he continues, have been "the consolation of my life and will be that of my death" (PP II, 397).

1. Schopenhauer's Invocation of Indian Philosophies

Schopenhauer's impressive familiarity with, and admiration for, Buddhism and Brahmanism do not sufficiently explain the frequency with which he invokes them. Plenty of philosophers, after all, are well acquainted with traditions or individual thinkers that they esteem but hardly ever mention in their own writings. Part of the explanation, certainly, is that Schopenhauer did not simply admire these traditions but perceived significant affinities between them and his own philosophical position. These alleged affinities will be discussed in later sections of this chapter. But this perception cannot, by itself, explain Schopenhauer's constant invocation of Indian thought, for again it is hardly unusual for philosophers – Spinoza and Wittgenstein come to mind – barely to remark on the similarities between their views and those of earlier thinkers.

An obvious reason for making frequent reference to Indian views would be that these were not merely similar to, but actually influenced and shaped, Schopenhauer's own thoughts. But on this issue, Schopenhauer is ambivalent. There are, certainly, passages where he seems to admit the Indian influence. He writes, for example, that his "doctrine could [not] have come about before the Upanishads, Plato and Kant cast their rays simultaneously into the mind of one man" (MR I, 467), and acknowledges that "what is best" in his own philosophy owes in part to "the sacred writings of the Hindus" (WWR I, 417). Elsewhere, however, he robustly denies influence. In the Preface to the first edition of WWR (xv–xvi), he states that his thought is "by no means to be found in the Upanishads," while in the second edition (WWR II, 169) he welcomes the congruence between Buddhism and his own doctrine, but writes that "I have certainly not been under its influence."

One is tempted to treat such disavowals – by a man known to be vain and jealous of his own originality – as disingenuous, and I shall be suggesting in a later section that it is at least plausible to maintain that certain shifts in Schopenhauer's position owe to his reading of the Indian literature. His disavowals, however, are consistent with a general view of Indian thought that he seems to hold in all honesty. This is the view – ironically close to the one that Hegel took of religion in general – that much of Buddhist and Hindu doctrine consist of "myths" which, however instructive and profound, only hint at truths that awaited their literal articulation in Schopenhauer's own writings. This is his attitude, certainly, towards the doctrine of rebirth, a "myth . . . closely associated with a philosophical truth accessible to so few" (WWR I, 356). More crucially, Indian religions have served as a "mythical vehicle" for "that great fundamental

truth . . . the need for salvation from an existence given up to suffering and death." This truth, of course, is the one that philosophy – Schopenhauer's own – "has the task of presenting . . . pure and unalloyed," and in a "straight line" that very few minds are able to follow (WWR II, 628–29).

Whether or not the Indian traditions influenced Schopenhauer's development, he has a number of reasons for invoking these traditions so liberally. For one thing, he holds that the great philosophical traditions of the West, including Platonism and Christianity, have an "Indian origin." Both the notion of a creator god and of philosophical idealism, Schopenhauer maintains, have travelled to the West from India via Egypt (PP I, 58–60). When to this historical perspective is added Schopenhauer's further conviction (see, e.g., WWR II, 504) that doctrines tend to be more "subtle" and less corrupted in their earliest formulations, it is unsurprising that he so often invokes Indian views where other authors would restrict themselves to citations from the Western canon.

A second reason is suggested by Schopenhauer's seemingly peculiar emphasis on the huge number of followers of Buddhism and Brahmanism. The explanation is his keenness to establish that views very similar to his own have – despite being "opposed to the natural tendency of mankind" (WWR II, 628), and despite their offense to Western common sense – been embraced by many millions of people for at least 2,000 years. It is salutary, for example, when challenging the engrained Western assumptions of "an unconditioned cause" and "a first beginning" to point out that such assumptions are not made by those "original religions" of India that "even now have the greatest number of followers on earth" (WWR I, 484).

Third, Schopenhauer finds it useful to invoke Indian tradition when attempting to provide concrete examples that will help his readers to grasp his admittedly "abstract" formulations, notably those concerning "the denial of the will-to-life." Properly to understand this denial, he writes, "we have to learn to know examples from experience," and Indian literature, he maintains, is especially "rich in descriptions of lives of saints" and others who have performed the denial. Indeed, it is only when we keep such examples before our minds that we have the confidence to "strive" and renew the "constant struggle," not to falter on the path of denial (WWR I, 384 and 391).

Finally, since philosophy – Schopenhauer's included – has its limits, because its knowledge is itself "only phenomenon, and therefore takes place only *in* the world" (WWR II, 642), Schopenhauer's soteriological ambition, our "salvation" in effect, must be continued by other means. This "other means" is an ineffable "mystical" wisdom that we may imbibe, more effectively than from any other source, from the "profitable and sublime" texts of Upanishadic and Buddhist tradition. Here is the most general reason behind Schopenhauer's "unprecedented readiness," as Wilhelm Halbfass (2003, 180) calls it, "to integrate Indian ideas into his own, European thinking and self-understanding" – and a readiness, one should add, to invoke those ideas in order to pass beyond the (Kantian) limits of thinking and understanding.

2. Schopenhauer on His Affinities with Indian Philosophy

While, as we saw, Schopenhauer vacillates over his debt to the Indian traditions, he constantly stresses the affinities that he perceives between these and his own views. His

ethics, for example, he holds to be "completely worked out in agreement" with Buddhism and Brahmanism (WWR II, 643), and he even asserts at one point that all the "utterances that make up the *Upanishads* could be derived" from his own thought (WWR I, xv–xvi).

It is best to present the perceived affinities, not in the order they emerge in his *magnum opus* (beginning, therefore, with agreement over the distinction between reality and representation), but in an order that reflects the direction or movement of Indian thought and, in my judgment, of Schopenhauer's own.

Bhikkhu Nanajivako (1970, 14–17) usefully points out that Schopenhauer's first mentions of Indian philosophy, in his 1814 manuscripts, start with a citation of a note from the Upanishads on "the whole tragedy of life," and proceed with references to willing as the cause of this tragedy and then to the possibility of "release from this willing," and hence from "the origin of evil," through "better knowledge." This order of thought corresponds, in effect, to that of the Four Noble Truths expounded by the Buddha – ones which, as Schopenhauer correctly recognized, are not, in their bare, unelaborated form peculiar to Buddhism, but are rather the shared currency of ancient Indian philosophy. As articulated by the Buddha, the Four Truths are that the world is one of suffering, that this suffering is due to "craving," that craving can be overcome, and that there is a "path" to follow, which includes the cultivation of "right understanding," that achieves this overcoming and hence puts an end to suffering.

We may, then, bring out the affinities that Schopenhauer perceived between Indian philosophy and his own by comparing some central ingredients of his thought with the Four Noble Truths. The first Noble Truth, that of the world as suffering, compares of course with Schopenhauer's famous "pessimism," his perception of the world as "a state or condition of suffering" (WWR II, 627) that he proceeds to describe with special relish – as being, for example, "the worst of all possible worlds" – in Chapter 46 of the second volume of WWR. He frequently makes explicit the correspondence between his view and that of the Indians, as when, for example, he points out that both Brahmanism and Buddhism, and not simply "my philosophy," appreciate that this world is "a place of penance" (PP II, 302).

The second Noble Truth, that of the origin of suffering as craving (or "thirst," *tanha* in Pali), corresponds to Schopenhauer's doctrine that the cause of suffering is the will, or as he often calls it, the "will to life." Sometimes, indeed, he employs the Indian terminology to describe the character of willing which, he writes, "can be fully compared to an unquenchable thirst" (WWR I, 312). In many passages that explain the association of willing with suffering, moreover, Schopenhauer essentially repeats the reasoning of the ancient Indian sages, including Gotama. Craving displays "dissatisfaction with one's own state" and hence "is suffering so long as it is not satisfied." But "no satisfaction . . . is lasting," and is merely the occasion for a "fresh striving." Hence there is no "end of suffering" (WWR I, 309). Predictably, the third Noble Truth, that of the ending of suffering through "the extinction of craving," parallels Schopenhauer's contention that suffering may be overcome through "the denial of the will." Again, he frequently stresses this parallel, at WWR II, 628 for example, when speaking of the Indians' recognition of the "great fundamental truth" of "the need for salvation" through denying the will.

It is with the correspondence Schopenhauer discerns between an element of his own position and the final Noble Truth, concerning the "path" to the extinction of craving

and suffering, that there emerge what he perceives as metaphysical parallels with Indian thought. A commonplace of Indian thought was that it is due to "ignorance" (*avidya* in Sanskrit) that people crave and "thirst." From this it follows that what the Buddha calls "right view" and "right thought" or "right understanding" – stages on the "Eightfold Path" to salvation – are essential to liberation from suffering. This is a view that Schopenhauer shares. It must, he writes, be from "a changed form of knowledge" that our "character is withdrawn from the power of motives" – the power, that is, of the will – so that finally "only knowledge remains; the will has vanished" (WWR I, 403 and 411). And there are at least three respects in which, he argues, this knowledge corresponds to the wisdom required for liberation in one or both of the main Indian traditions he discusses.

To begin with, it is essential to draw a fundamental distinction between reality and appearance or representation, between the thing-in-itself and what Schopenhauer follows the Indians in calling "Maya, the veil of deception" (WWR I, 8). Wisdom or right understanding, in effect, requires recognition that the everyday, phenomenal world in which we pursue our egoistic cravings – the Indians' *samsara* – is, by comparison with the thing-in-itself or the Absolute, an illusion. It requires, second, appreciation that at the level of reality itself there is no genuine distinction to be made between individual objects and persons. The *principium individuationis*, as Schopenhauer labels it, is applicable only at the level of representation, of the phenomenal world. He explicitly identifies this claim with the central doctrine of the Upanishads, expressed in the famous formula "Tat tvam asi" ("This thou art"), to the effect that reality, *Brahman*, is a single monistic whole with which each of us is ultimately identical. Schopenhauer explains in *On the Basis of Morality* how internalizing this monistic wisdom serves to still the will. Properly absorbed, this wisdom "bursts forth as *compassion* on which all genuine, i.e., disinterested, virtue . . . depends" (BM, 210). The sage who has overcome *avidya* has come to see that the ego whose cravings he or she once sought to satisfy is an illusion, and is not distinguished, *au fond*, from anything else in reality.

Finally, it is an aspect of the form of knowledge that enables withdrawal from the will that it recognizes the limits of knowledge and that what remains after the denial of the will-to-life has a "negative" character, indeed is a "nothing" in the sense that it cannot be conceptualized or articulated. In the First Edition of WWR, Schopenhauer chides Buddhism and Brahmanism for attempting, hopelessly, to provide this ineffable realm with an informative name, like *Brahman* (WWR I, 411), but in the Second Edition he revises this judgment, now emphasizing that, among Buddhists at least, there is proper appreciation of the "mystery" of a realm where "all [conceptual] knowledge necessarily ceases" and "nothing is left but mysticism" (WWR II, 610 and 612).

The movement of Schopenhauer's thought, I have suggested, parallels the one set out in the Four Noble Truths that, unless elaborated in distinctive ways, are the common currency of most of the Indian schools of philosophy. I then indicated the respects in which Schopenhauer perceives close affinities between components of his position and these Truths – affinities which begin with a shared sense of the tenor of our existence as suffering and continue to a common diagnosis of the cause of this condition and an agreed "cure" for it, and end with a number of metaphysical and epistemological parallels.

It is worth noting that there are several important ingredients of Indian thought with which Schopenhauer does not attempt to establish correspondences in his own position. Or better, perhaps, what correspondences there may be are ones of mood or atmosphere, rather than of substance. I am thinking especially of the central and related doctrines of karma and rebirth subscribed to by nearly all Indian schools, including the ones focused on by Schopenhauer. (The doctrines are related since rebirth is required if – as the doctrine of karma maintains – some of people's intentional actions can only "ripen," only "bear fruit," in the form of consequences for these people over a period that exceeds a single lifetime.) Schopenhauer's estimate of these doctrines is, as already mentioned, that they are inspiring myths that indirectly indicate fundamental truths. Taken in harness, the doctrines imply that the person who has overcome the will is no longer subject to the operation of karma and hence escapes the cycle of rebirth. As such, they express in mythical form the aspiration, more literally articulated in Schopenhauer's philosophy, to deny the will-to-life (WWR I, 356).

3. Assessing the Perceived Affinities

Some commentators have held that Schopenhauer's perception of affinities between his philosophy and Buddhism and Brahmanism is seriously threatened by large and decisive differences that he ignores. I want to consider and reject two such charges before proceeding to the more moderate criticism that, often, Schopenhauer's discussion is too vague to determine precisely what affinities he discerns.

Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1923, 189–91) – the distinguished Indian philosopher who became President of his country – implicitly takes Schopenhauer to task, during a criticism of the nineteenth-century indologist, Paul Deussen, for his idealist interpretation of the Upanishads and the Vedantic philosophy of the great Eighth Century CE thinker, Shankara. Deussen is accused of attributing to Vedanta the view that "the world in space and time is an appearance, an illusion." This, of course, is Schopenhauer's view – and, as we saw in the previous section, one that he takes himself to be sharing with Brahmanism.[2]

Here is not the place for a detailed examination of Vedantic metaphysics. It is sufficient to remark, in defense of Schopenhauer, that Radhakrishnan is an exception in *not* regarding the position of the Upanishads and Shankara as an idealist one in which the phenomenal world is deemed to be an illusion, *maya*. He may well be right to deny that their position is that of a Berkeleyan subjectivist: for they reject the existence of the individual minds in which, for Berkeley, "ideas" occur. But it is impossible to deny that there are passages in Shankara where the world of ordinary experience is referred to as *maya* and where an argument, echoed by Schopenhauer, is advanced for regarding this world as a "dream" or illusion. The argument is that "this waking world" only "remains" for us as something that seems real until we have a direct, "ultimate realization" of *Brahman*. Once we have this realization, what had hitherto seemed real must be looked on, in comparison, as illusion (see Cooper 2003, 39–40). The point is echoed by Schopenhauer when he speaks of our world, with its "suns and galaxies," as being a "nothing" for those in whom "the will has turned and denied itself" (WWR I, 412).

Another major difference between Schopenhauer and Indian thought – this time concerning salvation – is proposed by Peter Abelsen (1993, 268–70). Fundamental to the Buddhist dispensation, Abelson rightly holds, is the insistence that suffering can only be overcome when "ignorance has ceased," so that "the liberation of suffering [is] rather a matter of . . . 'knowledge'" than of will. "How different," Abelsen proceeds, "Schopenhauer's view is!" For him, since "every event is basically will . . . the event of someone's salvation is no exception." Abelsen concedes that "at first glance, Schopenhauer seems to have based salvation upon an insight," but argues that the "getting to know the essence of things" of which Schopenhauer speaks is not really insight or "intellectual realization" at all, but an "existential realization" that is the "result of compassion."

It is generally agreed among commentators that Schopenhauer's account of the denial of the will-to-life – his answer to the pressing question of how we "withdraw" from the power of the will, given that this is our inner, essential being – is inadequate. But, for two reasons, Abelsen's attempt to drive a wedge between Schopenhauer and Indian soteriology is unsuccessful. First, whatever Schopenhauer's considered answer to the pressing question may be, it is surely not just "at first glance" that he appeals, by way of an answer, to the role of knowledge or "insight." It is, recall, through a "changed form of knowledge" that, according to Schopenhauer, the will "vanishes." This is a matter on which he is totally explicit: "The will itself cannot be abolished by anything except *knowledge*" (WWR I, 400).

Second, the distinction Abelsen draws between "intellectual realization" and an "existential" state resulting from compassion for all beings is not one that Buddhism recognizes. A constant theme in the Prajnaparamita (ultimate wisdom) literature that Abelsen is discussing is the inseparability of compassion and wisdom. No one has fully absorbed the message of the Buddha unless he or she experiences compassion, and the compassion someone feels is not genuine unless informed by wisdom. Schopenhauer follows Buddhism here: "Whoever is morally noble reveals by his actions the deepest knowledge, the highest wisdom" (BM, 210). There is, then, no significant difference between the Buddhist and Schopenhauerian positions on the role of knowledge in liberation from the will or "craving."

Abelsen has a more general and moderate criticism to make of Schopenhauer's claim that his philosophy has close affinities with Indian systems of thought. This is to the effect that, because Schopenhauer "never bothered to explain the exact nature of the link he put forward," any such "link" with Buddhism or Brahmanism is "a matter of atmosphere rather than content" (Abelsen 1993, 255).

It is not obvious how serious a criticism Schopenhauer would regard this. Perhaps he would be content to say that he is establishing an affinity with the "innermost kernel and spirit" (WWR II, 604) of Indian religion, not asserting that there are "exact" doctrinal parallels. And, whether one calls it agreement in atmosphere or in content, there are surely those components of agreement between Schopenhauer and Indian thought which I described in the previous section – agreement, for instance, on at least the style of an explanation of human suffering and on how suffering might be overcome.

That said, Abelsen is right to state that Schopenhauer's comparisons of elements of his philosophy with aspects of Indian thought are often so sketchy that it is difficult to the point of impossibility to determine what, in any detail, he took the parallels to be.

A good, and an especially important, example is provided by Schopenhauer's distinction between reality and appearance, the thing-in-itself and representation. We saw earlier that he welcomes the insistence of Indian thinkers on such a distinction. But once we try to map the distinction as Schopenhauer understands it onto any distinction made in Indian thought, problems are soon encountered. One commentator suggests that the dimensions of Schopenhauer's "double-aspected" universe correspond to those of *Brahman* and *Atman* (Self) in Upanishadic writings (Wicks 2003, 10). But that cannot be right: Schopenhauer's worlds of will and representation are those of reality and appearance respectively, whereas *Brahman* and *Atman*, which are equated in Upanishadic thought, both belong on the side of reality.

Schopenhauer himself vacillates on where exactly an Indian distinction paralleling his own can be located. At times, he suggests that *Brahman* is the Indian version of will, maintaining (wrongly) that the name derives from a word meaning "force, will, wish" (see Halbfass 2003, 179–80). But this equation is hardly plausible. *Brahman*, after all – sometimes described in the texts as "bliss" – is that with which our goal is to achieve union; scarcely an avaricious monster, like the Schopenhauerian will, which it should be our goal to overcome. Elsewhere (PP II, 399–400), he proposes that a distinction central to the philosophy of the Samkhya school between *prakriti* (the underlying substance of the natural world, roughly) and *purusha* ("soul," roughly) corresponds to his own distinction between the will and the knowing subject. No doubt there are some similarities here – for instance, *prakriti*, like the will, is not accessible through perceptual representation. But there are plenty of differences too. *Prakriti*, unlike the will, is not directly knowable at all, but something whose existence is inferred. More seriously, a central Samkhyan claim is that persons are emphatically *not* to be identified with *prakriti*, whereas in Schopenhauer's system persons *are*, in their essence, will.[3]

The fact is that Schopenhauer does not say enough about the relationship to Indian thought of various of his claims to make it determinate where, if at all, exact parallels in doctrine are to be found. An instructive aspect of the vagueness of his discussion is his tendency, for much of the time, to run Buddhism and Brahmanism together. Thus, in applauding them both for their "monistic" character – their denial that, ultimately, there exists a plurality of separate, individual beings – Schopenhauer pays no attention at all to the very different doctrines that warrant this denial in the two cases. The Hindu point is that there is a single Self (*Atman*) with which each of us is identical. The Buddhist point is that there is only "not-self" (*Anatman*). Nirvana is not a condition of absorption into a single Self, but one in which all selfhood has been extinguished.

Sometimes, though, in his later writings Schopenhauer does distinguish Buddhist teachings from Brahmanical ones, and generally to the advantage of the former. After the publication of the First Edition of WWR, Schopenhauer's knowledge of, and admiration for, Buddhism grew. Measured by the standard of truth established by his own philosophy, Buddhism must be conceded "pre-eminence" over all other religions (WWR II, 169). This is partly because it is less given to pantheistic remarks than is Brahmanism, and less given, as well, to "excessive asceticism" and "self-mortification" (WWR II, 607). But above all, Buddhism is, as Schopenhauer sees it, metaphysically leaner and more honest than other systems, including the Vedantic. Whereas in the First Edition (WWR I, 411), he had accused both religions of pretending, with their talk of *Brahman* and Nirvana, to know something about what remains once the will is abolished, he

later exonerates Buddhism from this charge. Buddhists, he now writes, "with complete frankness describe the matter only negatively as Nirvana, which is [simply] the negation of this world or *samsara*" (WWR II, 608; see also PP II, 400–401). Buddhism recognizes, more clearly than any other Indian school, that what remains after the denial of the will is a "nothing" – nothing that may be articulated and described.

Sketchy as Schopenhauer's remarks on the merits of Buddhism are, they are at some odds with the images of Buddhism that prevailed in Schopenhauer's own century, and they better anticipate contemporary interpretations of Buddhist thought. Typical of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century understanding of Buddhism are the views of a leading figure in the Pali Text Society, Mrs Rhys Davids, for whom the Buddhist message of suffering and impermanence would, unless compensated for in some way, "leave . . . us cold and morally indifferent." If we are to be drawn to "righteousness, let alone piety and devotion," the Buddhist Nirvana must be equated with something like the Christian heaven, with an "ambrosia" (Rhys Davids 1912, 111). It is to Schopenhauer's credit, argues Bhikkhu Nanajivako (1970, 17), that he stood out against such "comforting" readings, fairly and squarely recognizing that Nirvana is, as its etymology suggests, a kind of "extinction," while also recognizing that reflection on Nirvana fosters a morality of compassion and a motive for denial of the will-to-life.

4. Reasons for Focusing on Schopenhauer's Relationship to Indian Philosophy

The preceding paragraph may suggest that one reason for paying attention to Schopenhauer's references to Indian philosophy is that this would enhance our understanding of the Indian traditions. Some commentators certainly think so. "No other Western philosopher," it has been claimed, "elucidated . . . Indian philosophies as rigorously as he did," and "Indian philosophy is but richer with the contribution made by Schopenhauer" (Raj Singh 2006, 396 and 400). But, as the preceding section has also made clear, this exaggerates, despite his aperçus on Buddhism, the extent of the "rigor" of Schopenhauer's scholarship. Anyway, the light that he occasionally casts on Indian thought cannot be the main reason, in a volume devoted to Schopenhauer's own philosophy, for attending to his invocations of Indian wisdom. Nor, by the same token, can the main reason be that the relationship between Schopenhauer and Indian thought provides for an exemplary exercise in "comparative philosophy" – in, for instance, the identification of cross-cultural conditions responsible for the emergence, in such different times and climes, of comparable metaphysical outlooks.[4]

There do exist, however, at least three good reasons for attending to this relationship as part of the enterprise better to understand aspects of Schopenhauer's thinking, and hence for redressing the neglect of his appeals to Indian traditions in all but the most recent books devoted to his philosophy.

(1) Attention to Schopenhauer's reception of Indian thought may help, first, in settling disputes concerning alleged changes in Schopenhauer's position between the two editions of his great work. Consider, for instance, the dispute as to whether Schopenhauer's conception of the thing-in-itself changed. Some writers have claimed that,

despite continuing references in the later works to the thing-in-itself as the will, this identification is in effect abandoned. Moira Nicholls, for one, argues (1999, 185–86) that "in his later writings . . . the thing-in-itself is will in only one of its aspects," or indeed "not will at all, but . . . solely the object of awareness of those who have achieved salvation," the object therefore of "mystical awareness." Certainly Schopenhauer himself remarks in a letter of 1852 that "I have never said what the thing-in-itself is apart from [its] relation [to appearances]; but in it, it is the will to life" (cited in Halbfass 2003, 178). (Actually, what this remark implies is, not that Schopenhauer's position changed, but that he *never* held the thing-in-itself to be the will – a questionable claim, surely.)

What matters in the present context is not whether Schopenhauer's view of the thing-in-itself did alter, but to propose – as does Nicholls – that, if it did, this is likely to have been the result of his increasing perceived affinity with the metaphysics of Brahmanism and Buddhism. At one point (WWR II, 325–26), for example, he seems to be endorsing a view of the thing-in-itself found, he maintains, in the great Hindu classic, the *Bhagavad-Gita* – a view of it as "entire and undivided . . . the sustainer, annihilator and producer of beings." Such talk, he concedes, is "mystical and metaphorical," but this is the only appropriate language for this essentially ineffable and "wholly transcendent theme."[5]

Another contentious instance of a shift in Schopenhauer's thinking is proposed by Dale Jacquette (2005, 82–84), this time concerning his argument for extending the notion of the will from its original "home" in human action to the cosmos at large. In WWR I, 110, argues Jacquette, Schopenhauer "borrow[s] [the] name and concept" of will from the case – namely, the human will – to which it most clearly and obviously has reference, and then applies it by analogy to the "innermost" being of natural phenomena which, when closely observed, have striking similarities with human actions. But in Chapter 18 of WWR II, Jacquette continues, Schopenhauer employs a different argument, to the effect that, since "*we ourselves are the thing-in-itself*," there is therefore a "strict numerical identity" between our will and the essence of the cosmos. Hence in being aware of ourselves as will, we are *ipso facto* aware of reality at large *qua* thing-in-itself.

Again, the point in the present context is not to adjudicate whether there really has been a shift in Schopenhauer's argument, but to propose that, if there has been, the change may be explicable in the light of Schopenhauer's deepened reception of an Indian doctrine which he cites with increasing frequency, in his 1839 *On the Basis of Morality* for instance. This is the doctrine, already alluded to, encapsulated in the formula "tat tvam asi" ("This thou art"). The formula proclaims the identity, *au fond*, of each self with The Self (*Atman*) and hence with reality itself (*Brahman*), and has as a corollary that acquaintance with oneself is acquaintance with reality as a whole. If reality or the thing-in-itself is the will, then the Upanishadic formula, applied in the context of Schopenhauer's position, will guarantee that knowledge of myself as will is *ipso facto* knowledge of the innermost being of the world.

(2) Attention to Schopenhauer's reception of Indian thought may help, second, in attempts to identify the general tone or character of his philosophy. I have two matters especially in mind – his alleged "pessimism," and the nature of his philosophical idealism.

According to John Atwell (1995, 31), Schopenhauer's "single thought" is that the world is the "striving of the will to become conscious of itself so that, recoiling in horror at its inner, divisive nature, it may annul itself . . . and then reach salvation." If this is right, then it is inappropriate to categorize the tone of Schopenhauer's overall philosophy as "pessimism." Not merely does salvation from the terrors of the will's dominion seem destined, but this destiny is the very purpose of existence.

Atwell's teleological interpretation of Schopenhauer's philosophy has been challenged, despite the existence of passages that, at first glance at least, look to endorse this interpretation. For example, Schopenhauer writes that his attentive readers will have recognized, as one "result" of his philosophy, that "the will's turning away from life [is] the ultimate aim of temporal existence" (PP I, 223). Now even if the teleological tone of this remark is the exception rather than the rule, there are countless other remarks where, without quite saying that salvation is the aim or point of existence, Schopenhauer emphasizes his conviction that the will in its "inner nature" will be seen for what it is, and with this vision there will come liberation and salvation (see, e.g., WWR I, 400; WWR II, 605). And this conviction is sufficient reason, arguably, to resist the label of "pessimist" being attached to Schopenhauer.

The relevant point, here, is that Schopenhauer's conviction is one that, it would seem, he has inherited from Indian philosophy. He writes, for instance, that the "very fine" reflection that nothing could be "the aim of our existence except the knowledge that it would be better for us not to exist" is "entirely Indian in spirit and origin" (WWR II, 628). Elsewhere he refers to the Buddhist idea that, grim as *samsara* (the phenomenal world) may be, there resides in it a "pledge that . . . there lies hidden a good and redeeming principle which can break through and release the whole" (PP II, 219). Schopenhauer is right to recognize, within various schools of Indian philosophy, the thought that an initial immersion in *samsara* is a precondition of the emergence of the kind of knowledge that is constitutive of liberation or salvation.

A second issue concerning the character of Schopenhauer's thought is that of the kind of idealism that he embraces. It is often remarked that Schopenhauer's idealism sounds "more radical" than Kant's. And this is due, surely, to his un-Kantian relish for describing the empirical world as "mere phenomenon . . . as akin to a dream" (WWR II, 4), as "illusion" and as "Maya." It is difficult, in my judgment, to explain this relish except by reference to Schopenhauer's enthusiasm for texts of Brahmanism and Buddhism in which precisely such an attitude is expressed. Many Mahayana Buddhist texts, for example, with some of which Schopenhauer was familiar, elevate the claim that all things are "empty" – that is, are without independent, substantial "own-being" – into a denial of their real existence and a corresponding affirmation of their "dream-like" status. And we saw in the last section of this chapter that the Upanishads and the Vedantic thinker, Shankara, also speak in this idiom.

Schopenhauer, I suggest, was impressed by Shankara's argument, briefly mentioned in that section, for the illusory character of the empirical world. The argument, recall, was that for the person who has a mystical experience of reality, of *Brahman*, the ordinary world can only figure, by comparison, as mere appearance – just as, for the person who wakes up, what has just been experienced is now seen to be a dream. It is such an argument, surely, which inspires one of the most beautiful passages in Schopenhauer, where he gives us a portrait of an "awakened" person based, one assumes, on descrip-

tions and pictures of sages in Indian literature and art. This is the portrait of a man, a "pure knowing being, . . . the undimmed mirror of the world," who can now "look back calmly and with a smile on the phantasmagoria of this world . . . Life and its forms merely float before him as a fleeting phenomenon, as a light morning dream to one half-awake, through which reality already shines" (WWR I, 390–91).

(3) The passage just cited suggests a further reason for attending to Schopenhauer's relationship to Indian thought when attempting better to understand his own position. Sometimes, in my judgment, Schopenhauer possesses in the Indian materials on which he draws the resources for views that are more considered and more in harmony with his general approach than those he actually articulates. If so, reflection on these materials might indicate what Schopenhauer *ought* to have said.

Most commentators agree that one of the least satisfactory of Schopenhauer's discussions is that on the character of our condition *after* the denial of the will-to-life. Someone might reply that no description of this condition should be expected from Schopenhauer, for is it not, as he puts it, a "nothing"? But the passage from WWR I, 390–91 shows that, for Schopenhauer, someone may continue living in the world, as a "pure knowing being," after denial of the will-to-life. And this would be entirely in keeping with the Indian tradition. According to Buddhist scripture, for example, the Buddha continued living on earth for another 50 years after his liberation or enlightenment. Hence one cannot take literally the thought seemingly encapsulated in Schopenhauer's gnomic formula "No will: no representation, no world" (WWR I, 411). The enlightened figure depicted at WWR I, 390–91 has overcome the will, and but is not world-less.

When, as on those pages, Schopenhauer does attempt to describe someone's condition after the denial of the will, the results are unsatisfying. Thus we are told that, to such a person, everything is a matter of indifference. But this is certainly not true of the Buddha, who is frequently critical of those ascetic "drop-outs" for whom nothing in human life is of consequence. Nor, relatedly, can it be the case, as Schopenhauer implies, that the enlightened life is entirely without desires, for a being without any desires would not act at all. Had Schopenhauer attended more closely to some of the Indian views on the liberated condition that he himself invokes, he might, I propose, have presented a more satisfying description of the condition of liberation from the will.

There are three elements of the Buddhist outlook, in particular, on which Schopenhauer could have drawn. First, the world of the unenlightened person is shaped and structured by the will, so that things are experienced through the prism, as it were, of the economy of desire. As Schopenhauer puts it, such a world is "the mirror of . . . willing" (WWR I, 351). Second, the enlightened person, unlike the person still in thrall to the will, is entirely aware that ordinary, unenlightened experience is shaped by the will – that, in particular, the world is artificially carved up into individual objects precisely in order to answer to the demands of the will. Hence the enlightened person, by contrast, has "knowledge of the whole" (WWR I, 379), and experiences things, not as independent entities but, as Buddhists put it, in their "emptiness" and interdependence. Finally, for Buddhists, it is not desire *per se* that is "extinguished" in the enlightened person, but the "thirst of egoism," as Schopenhauer calls it (WWR I, 364). The Buddhist point – one that Schopenhauer could surely endorse – is that it is only what might be called "self-referring" desires that constitute a form of enslavement. By this,

I mean desires like those involved in jealousy and ambition which, by their nature, have some state of the self as an explicit goal. Whereas the hungry person simply wants some food, the envious person desires that *he* or *she* does not have less than another person. It is these self-referring desires that are "extinguished" by the denial of the will-to-life.

If Schopenhauer had assembled these Buddhist insights – ones that he himself acknowledges at different places – he could have presented a more coherent and satisfying account of our condition after the denial of the will than any that he actually attempts. It would be an account of men and women whose experience of the world is not dictated by pragmatic purposes and geared to self-referring desires, and is instead an experience of things as they are in their "emptiness," their interdependent membership of a seamless whole.

Attention to Schopenhauer's Indian sources, then, is not of merely scholarly interest or of interest only to "comparative philosophy." I have tried to establish that, in a number of ways, attention to these may enrich the understanding of Schopenhauer's own philosophy.

See also 5 Schopenhauer and Transcendental Idealism; 6 Schopenhauer's Philosophy of the Dark Origin; 15 Schopenhauer and the Objectivity of Art; 23 Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner.

Notes

1 For details of Schopenhauer's familiarity with Indian literature and scholarship, see Nicholls (1999) and Berger (2004).
2 Radhakrishnan thinks that Deussen's idealism is inherited from Schopenhauer, for both of them regard Kant's "refutation of idealism" as a "blunder."
3 On Samkhya, see Cooper 2003, 27–33.
4 For a scholarly examination of Schopenhauer's relationship to Indian thought from a comparative perspective, see Berger (2004).
5 See, too, the note later added to Volume I, where he makes approving reference to the Buddhist "ultimate wisdom," which is "beyond all knowledge" since it concerns "the point where subject and object no longer exist" – the "point," that is, of the thing-in-itself (WWR I, 412).

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19

Life-Denial versus Life-Affirmation

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Pessimism and Asceticism

KEN GEMES AND CHRISTOPHER JANAWAY

It is more or less a commonplace in the history of ideas that Friedrich Nietzsche was deeply enamored of Schopenhauer's philosophy when he encountered it in his youth, that his enthusiasm sustained him through the writing of his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and his essay *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1874), but that his rejection of his predecessor grew increasingly profound and hostile through his remaining years of frenetic intellectual production. More nuanced narratives can and should be constructed on the basis of the 120 or so references to Schopenhauer in Nietzsche's published writings, not to mention the vastly greater number that went unpublished – Nietzsche never seems to have swallowed Schopenhauer's doctrines wholesale even in his days of adulation, and in his later mood of outright rejection Schopenhauer remains (and this is honor indeed) his most honored enemy.[1] But here we shall take our departure simply from two main contentions: (1) that a central strand of Nietzsche's mature thought, encompassing his critique of post-Christian moral values, pessimism and the ascetic ideal, is a response to some of Schopenhauer's deepest philosophical claims; (2) that re-constructing a debate between the two thinkers on these central topics can illuminate the significance of both their contributions to philosophy.

1. Saying No

One of Nietzsche's more prominent mentions of Schopenhauer occurs in the Preface to *On the Genealogy of Morality*:

> The issue for me was the *value* of morality – and over this I had to struggle almost solely with my great teacher Schopenhauer . . . In particular the issue was the value of the unegoistic, of the instincts of compassion, self-denial, self-sacrifice, precisely the instincts

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> that Schopenhauer had gilded, deified, and made otherworldly until finally they alone were left for him as the 'values in themselves', on the basis of which he *said 'no'* to life, also to himself.
>
> (GM, Preface, § 5)

While Nietzsche would certainly argue that all proponents of the morality he is seeking to revalue, and all participants in the wider Judeo-Christian tradition, have fundamentally been "no-sayers" of the same stripe, in Schopenhauer this tendency is brought to a head through the explicit *theorization* of *Verneinung* – saying no, denial, negation – as the preferred attitude to existence and the route to salvation from it. For Nietzsche, Schopenhauer spells out mercilessly what much moral and metaphysical theorizing has never quite admitted as its own deep-lying basis: "*a will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life" (GM III, § 28). Some of the later Nietzsche's more considered reflections on Schopenhauer picture him as performing a vital transitional role: ridding the philosophy of value of any spurious consolation from remnants of past theism, but at the same time setting up a conservative, negative ideal that can provoke us to find a positive one in the future:

> As a philosopher, Schopenhauer was the *first* admitted and uncompromising atheist among us Germans . . . This is the locus of his whole integrity; unconditional and honest atheism is simply the *presupposition* of his way of putting the problem, as a victory of the European conscience won finally and with great difficulty; as the most fateful act of two thousand years of discipline for truth that in the end forbids itself the *lie* of faith in God . . . As we thus reject Christian interpretation and condemn its 'meaning' as counterfeit, *Schopenhauer's* question immediately comes at us in a terrifying way: *Does existence have any meaning at all?*
>
> (GS, § 357)

> Anyone like me, who has tried for a long time and with some enigmatic desire, to think pessimism through to its depths and to deliver it from the half-Christian, half-German narrowness and naïveté with which it has finally presented itself to this century, namely in the form of the Schopenhauerian philosophy; anyone who has ever really looked with an Asiatic and supra-Asiatic eye into and down at the most world-negating of all possible ways of thinking – beyond good and evil, and no longer, like Schopenhauer and the Buddha, under the spell and delusion of morality –; anyone who has done these things (and perhaps precisely *by* doing these things) will have inadvertently opened his eyes to the inverse ideal: to the ideal of the most high-spirited, vital, world-affirming individual, who has learned not just to accept and go along with what was and what is, but who wants it again *just as it was and is* through all eternity.
>
> (BGE, § 56)

Why is Schopenhauer both praised for his atheism and condemned for being "half-Christian"? One of the chief criticisms Nietzsche makes is that although he honestly posed the question of the "meaning of existence," Schopenhauer's response used an essentially Christian morality as a buffer against confronting pessimism in a really unbearable form: "What Schopenhauer himself said in answer to this question

was – forgive me – something hasty, youthful, a mere compromise, a way of remaining and staying stuck in precisely those Christian and ascetic moral perspectives in which one had *renounced faith* along with the faith in God" (GS, § 357).[2]

Nietzsche's allegation is that Schopenhauer could not face true pessimism, but instead took refuge in affirming a morality of compassion, a moral outlook of seeing all others as "I once more" and taking on their sufferings as one's own. This position finds positive value at the expense of denying value to the individual human self as such. For morality in this conception, homogenizing all individuals and ultimately denying them full reality – is a step on the road of total self-abnegation, as Schopenhauer himself says: "from the same source from which all goodness, affection, virtue, and nobility of character spring, there ultimately arises also what I call denial of the will to life" (WWR I, 378).[3]

A characteristic that unifies Schopenhauer's philosophy of value is that there really is nothing of true value in his scheme of things that is not characterized in some way by a flight away from natural embodied consciousness of oneself as individual subject and agent, and towards will-lessness and abandonment of individuality. One can be morally good, for Schopenhauer, if and only if one adopts a standpoint of self-negation in which one refrains from imposing one's individual will on events and occupies the viewpoint of the whole. Attaining the – in Schopenhauer's eyes – correct view that individuation is illusory shifts the individual away from attachment to his or her own will and its successes and failures and towards compassion for all others. Such a person is moral in the sense of being anti-egoistic or self-negating. The subject of aesthetic experience is a "*pure* will-less, painless, timeless *subject of knowledge*," the eye that passively mirrors the world rather than interacting with it via the embodied and willing individual (WWR I, 179). And the ultimate denial of the will-to-life is glossed as a prolongation of this very state of will-less objectivity (WWR I, 390).

In short, the common feature of the value found in aesthetic experience, in a moral disposition, and in the redemptive denial of the will-to-life is that they involve attitudes of disengagement from willing, detachment from bodily individuality, and loss of the self – at least where the self is construed as anything other than a pure contemplative subject, or an eye with no direction or place in the world.[4] So in this way Nietzsche is right that the key to the attainment of *any* genuine value for Schopenhauer is saying No to life and himself. Willing, living, existing as an individual human being, are the occasion for lamentation, if correctly understood. The person who knows that suffering is endemic to all existence is incapable of identifying with the weal or woe of one part of the world as against all others. He or she can no longer proceed as if this individual's gaining such and such willed end, or suffering such and such setback in its willing, were worth anything at all. Schopenhauer's redemption occurs at a high price: I must come to see myself, the individual human being with all its potential weals and woes, as worthy of absolute rejection. So anyone who sees things aright will reject even a single repetition of his or her human life, and "will much prefer to choose complete non-existence" (WWR I, 324).

Unless we appreciate the extent to which Schopenhauer thus locates value in the negation of individual selfhood, or in the extinction of our natural attachment to life, we shall not fully comprehend the nature of Nietzsche's opposition to his predecessor, or his pressing need to delineate a new ideal. Nietzsche seems shocked and scandalized

by Schopenhauer's conception of value – surely an ascetic ideal *par excellence* – and this reaction informs his drive to find a manner in which to say Yes to life and to the world. For example, he describes a crucial opposition between "the *degenerate* instinct that turns against life with subterranean vindictiveness (– Christianity, Schopenhauer's philosophy . . .)" and "a formula of the *highest affirmation* . . . an unreserved yea-saying even to suffering, even to guilt, even to everything questionable and strange about existence" (EH, "The Birth of Tragedy," § 2). He even characterizes Christianity itself in Schopenhauerian terms as the "*denial of the will to life* made into a religion," which sets itself against "a higher order of values, the noble, life-affirming values" (EH, "The Case of Wagner," § 2). Schopenhauerian No-saying appears here as the generic phenomenon of which Christianity is but one instance.

The latter point reflects Schopenhauer's own attitude towards Christianity. Although, like Nietzsche, Schopenhauer expends no energy arguing against the existence of God, he is as firm as Nietzsche in his rejection of the whole Christian metaphysics of the perfect divine being, immaterial souls, personal immortality, the highest good, and absolute values and imperatives. He parallels Nietzsche also in assimilating Christianity to Eastern religions on the grounds of its sharing with them a more fundamental orientation of affect and will towards life and existence. We might say that for both philosophers the metaphysical dogmas of a religion are a mere superficial feature in comparison with its profound orientation of affirmation or negation. Thus Schopenhauer says:

> Christianity taught only what the whole of Asia knew already long before and even better . . . [T]hat great fundamental truth contained in Christianity as well as in Brahmanism and Buddhism, the need for salvation from an existence given up to suffering and death, and its attainability through the denial of the will, hence by a decided opposition to nature, is beyond all comparison the most important truth there can be.
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> (WWR II, 627–28)

It is here that we shall find one of Nietzsche's deepest points of controversy with his "great teacher."

2. Will-to-Life: Affirmation and Denial

The passage quoted above about wanting "what was and is just as it was and is" alludes to what Nietzsche calls his "highest formula of affirmation," the much discussed doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same (EH, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," § 1). Could one bear the thought of one's life repeating itself unchanged over and over again without end? It is less well known that Schopenhauer already addresses this Nietzschean question, albeit somewhat buried in the intricate discussion of the Fourth Book of *The World as Will and Representation*:

> A man who . . . found satisfaction in life and took perfect delight in it; who desired, in spite of calm deliberation, that the course of his life as he had hitherto experienced it should be of endless duration or of constant recurrence [*immer neuer Wiederkehr*]; and whose courage

> to face life was so great that, in return for life's pleasures, he would willingly and gladly put up with all the hardships and miseries to which it is subject; such a man would stand [now follows a quote from Goethe] 'with firm, strong bones on the well-grounded, enduring earth,' and would have nothing to fear. . . . [M]any men would occupy the standpoint here set forth, if their knowledge kept pace with their willing, in other words if they were in a position . . . to become clearly and distinctly themselves. This is for knowledge the viewpoint of the complete *affirmation of the will to life* [*Bejahung des Willens zum Leben*].
>
> (WWR I, 283–85)

Schopenhauer is here considering ways in which human beings may be unconcerned by the fact of their future death. This may happen either reflectively or unreflectively. Unreflective affirmation of the will-to-life is intrinsic to the living being as such, and can also be called affirmation of the body, for "the fundamental theme of all the many different acts of will is the satisfaction of the needs inseparable from the body's existence in health," which "can be reduced to the maintenance of the individual and the propagation of the species" (WWR I, 327). In simply throwing ourselves into living, as any animal does, we tend to feel naturally secured against death, or indeed oblivious of it:

> In man, as in the animal that does not think, there prevails as a lasting state of mind the certainty, springing from innermost consciousness, that he is nature, the world itself. By virtue of this, no one is noticeably disturbed by the thought of certain and never-distant death, but everyone lives on as though he is bound to live for ever.
>
> (WWR I, 281)

Schopenhauer's explanation invokes his central metaphysical doctrine that the common nature or essence of us all is will-to-life. The world appears as populated by distinct individuals with a finite temporal duration; but, to the "metaphysical glance" that sees through space and time (the principle of individuation) and penetrates to the thing-in-itself, the same world is a *nunc stans* – "The present alone is that which always exists and stands firm and immovable" (WWR I, 279). This, allegedly, explains why each living thing, in simply being, is a perpetual inhabitant of the present, existing in blind harmony with its own metaphysical essence. If a human being rationally grasps the alleged metaphysical truth about the will-to-life as the essence shared by the whole world, he or she may, Schopenhauer thinks, develop a *reflective* unconcern for death. The person from our initial passage who becomes "clearly and distinctly" himself (or herself) reflects that his or her nature is will-to-life, that while individuals come and go, the time in which they do so is an illusion, and that the will to life itself, which we all share as our essence, exists only timelessly and can never be destroyed.

Setting aside the grave and familiar worries about the metaphysics of the will[5] (about which the later Nietzsche is contemptuous, the early Nietzsche at best dubious, at worst duplicitous),[6] let us note that there are two kinds of affirmation for Schopenhauer, reflective and unreflective, and that what is affirmed is the same in both cases: "this life . . . is now willed as such by the will with knowledge, consciously and deliberately, just as hitherto the will willed it without knowledge and as a blind impulse" (WWR I, 285). Schopenhauer's message concerning the "strong-boned," affirmative individual embodies a form of consolation: someone whose attachment to life is boundless, who loves life, whatever it may bring, who desires to live and even to repeat his life endlessly,

can nevertheless re-gain, through reflection, that total indifference to his future non-existence as an individual that is found naturally in all other living creatures.

Things are well and good for the "strong-boned" man, up to a point. But Schopenhauer comments that this reflectively affirmative individual still lacks knowledge. He has not come to know that "constant suffering is essential to all life" (WWR I, 283). Schopenhauer goes on to argue – to Nietzsche's eventual consternation – that an antithetical outlook, called *Verneinung des Willens zum Leben*, denial of the will-to-life, holds the only true hope of salvation: "true salvation [*Heil*], deliverance [*Erlösung*] from life and suffering, cannot even be imagined without complete denial of the will" (WWR I, 397). The saving state of denial results when the will-to-life is quietened or sedated: the realization that willing is as such a painful condition combines with the insight that individual manifestations of will are not metaphysically basic but a kind of temporary illusion thrown up by a world that itself insatiably strives but can never be resolved. If one attains knowledge of these two truths combined, one is at a cognitive advantage over both the unreflective and the reflective affirmer of life. One sees that the world devours itself to no avail, and that it is genuinely of no consequence whether at any moment the particular portion of the world one is identical to is devouring or being devoured. Nothing that one desires, hopes for, or succeeds in doing as an individual constitutes a good sufficient to compensate for the burden of existing.

Schopenhauer is sure that he has located a state superior to affirmation. But he says it would be senseless to *recommend* affirmation or denial as if they were attitudes that could be adopted at will, one in preference to the other (WWR I, 285). Denial of the will occurs when knowledge acts as the "quieter of the will," instead of motivating it as usual (WWR I, 334, 379, 397). His word here is *Quietiv*, which would be better rendered as "sedative" or "tranquillizer." So it is not really that knowledge gives one *reason* to take one or other attitude. Rather, it seems to act causally, knocking out the impulse to do, strive, or desire on one's own behalf as an individual agent: "the will . . . turns away from life" (WWR I, 379) – though the detail of how this happens is obscure.[7]

Sometimes Schopenhauer appears to describe denial of the will as an attitude deliberately adopted, an attitude one "tries" or "struggles" to have in opposition to the natural will expressed in one's bodily existence, as when he equates denial of the will with asceticism:

> [T]here arises in him a strong aversion to the inner nature whose expression is his own phenomenon, to the will to life . . . He therefore renounces precisely this inner nature, which appears in him and is expressed already by his body, and his action gives the lie to his phenomenon, and appears in open contradiction thereto. Essentially nothing but phenomenon of the will, he ceases to will anything, guards against attaching his will to anything, tries to establish firmly in himself the greatest indifference to all things. His body, healthy and strong, expresses the sexual impulse through the genitals, but he denies the will, and gives the lie to the body . . . Voluntary and complete chastity is the first step in asceticism or denial of the will to life.
>
> (WWR I, 380)

Elsewhere, however, he reserves the term "asceticism . . . in the narrower sense" for the "*deliberate* breaking of the will by refusing the agreeable and looking for the

disagreeable" (WWR I, 392). The fundamental shift that he calls denial of the will, or even more radically, the will's abolition or elimination of itself (*Selbstaufhebung des Willens*)[8] is, however, importantly different from such deliberate acts:

> since . . . that *self-elimination of the will* comes from knowledge, but all knowledge and insight as such are independent of free choice, that denial of willing, that entrance into freedom, is not to be forcibly arrived at by intention or design, but comes from the innermost relation of knowing and willing in man; hence it comes suddenly, as if flying in from without.
>
> (WWR I, 404)

So the transformation that consists in the sedation of will brought about by knowledge is not an act or state of *my will*, and also not a matter of my being moved or affected by something (which would be effects upon my will). Schopenhauer has in mind something deeper: the locus of agency or quasi-agency here is not the individual but the will-to-life – it *acts*, indeed acts freely, abolishing itself. To be more precise, *the will-to-life as it is manifest in me* abolishes itself. A picture we might have here is something like this. The will-to-life is "the real self," as Schopenhauer says elsewhere: it is what I really am, like it or not, will it or not (WWR II, 606). It gives rise to the way I am disposed to respond to motives, dispositions not subject to my own agency, or to what we normally call my own will. I cannot in any ordinary sense *will* what or how it is that I will, or what my character is, or what fundamental dispositions to respond to motives lie within me, what fundamental dispositions I have to be moved or affected by the world of appearance as it strikes me.

I have an essence, my *Wesen*, my being, what I truly am, and this is what is supposed to be affected by that extreme knowledge that Schopenhauer talks about, the "knowledge of the whole," and the comprehension of its inner nature as "a vain striving, an inward conflict, and a continual suffering" (WWR I, 379). The will-to-life that needs to be denied can be equated, he says, with what the Church calls "the natural man" (WWR I, 404). Something very radical is to be imagined here, which he describes as "the abolition of the character," "the whole essence [or being] is fundamentally changed and reversed" and "a new person takes the place of the old" (WWR I, 403, 404, our translations). So what he envisages as the effect of the "knowledge of the whole" is that the will-to-life as manifest in me is switched off; my essence changes; my character disappears; my deep-lying natural dispositions to respond to motives are no more. My own real nature shuts itself down in recoil at the content of that "knowledge of the whole," and the transformation does not engage my own will as an agent in the ordinary sense. I am not *motivated* to switch off my natural response to motives; I do not *try* to stop being a being that tries for the ordinary things of life. The responding and trying part of me, which is my very essence, becomes disabled by knowledge. When I know the ubiquity of suffering and the illusoriness of individuality, my consciousness detaches from its identification with the individual embodiment of the will that I am. "Till then," he says, "everyone is nothing but this will itself" (WWR I, 397). What is denied is therefore nothing less than myself as such, everything that I am, or at any rate everything I have been. And what am I after knowledge has sedated the will? The subject continues existing as if it were a mere will-less subject of knowledge, a disembodied point of view on the world.

3. A Summary of Schopenhauer's Argument for the Denial of the Will

Schopenhauer, then, advocates denial or negation of the will-to-life as the only possible salvation from life and suffering. And he claims that such salvation is necessary, on the grounds that living, properly understood, could never be preferable to not living, and that the world is something whose existing at all is something we should lament rather than celebrate. The following thoughts are all held true by Schopenhauer, and form at least the framework of an argument that we can reconstruct in summary form.

Though Schopenhauer has arguments for each of the following, for present purposes we may treat them as premises:

1. Everything that exists has the same unchanging essence.
2. The unchanging essence of everything is willing.
3. Willing achieves no positive end.
4. Willing is, and gives rise to, suffering.
5. There is no ultimate end towards which we suffer[9]
6. Suffering robs existence of positive value.

The nature of a human individual can be presented as an instance of 2:[10]

7. The individual's unchanging essence is willing.

– and from 7 together with 3 and 4, Schopenhauer can arrive at:

8. The existence of an individual consists essentially in suffering with no positive end.

and then, by way of 6, he can suggest

9. The existence of the individual has no positive value.

and

10. It would have been better if the individual had never existed.

In parallel fashion he can claim the following about the world as a whole:

11. In the world as a whole willing never ceases.
12. In the world as a whole suffering never ceases.
13. The existence of the world as a whole consists essentially in suffering with no positive end.
14. The existence of the world as a whole has no positive value.
15. It would have been better if the world as a whole had never existed.

However, a further train of thought suggests a kind of remedy:

16. In ordinary consciousness the subject identifies with the natural manifestation of will in the individual.

17. The truly real thing-in-itself, lying outside space and time, is beyond individuation.

So:

18. The individual is illusory.

– which opens the way for a different form of consciousness:

19. In a better consciousness the subject views the world as a whole without identification with the natural manifestation of will in the individual.

How do we reach this better consciousness?

20. The will's self-negation in its individual manifestation brings about the better consciousness.
21. The will's self-negation is caused by knowledge of the ubiquity of suffering and the illusoriness of the individual.

The expression "better consciousness" was one Schopenhauer himself used in early notes,[11] although later he abandoned it. The question for us, however, is: if there is a kind of consciousness that is better than the ordinary, what is supposed to make it better? There appear to be two related criteria: (1) that it remedies our cognitive deficiency by giving us insight into an ultimate reality, and (2) that it releases us from our own personal suffering's mattering to us. For Schopenhauer a cognitive re-alignment with the true nature of reality causes a deep change in the orientation of the will-to-life within us, and rescues our consciousness from the value-corroding influence of suffering.

4. Nietzsche's Projects

In Nietzsche's earliest works there are two overriding questions that animate much of his thought. The first is a problem bequeathed by German romanticism and centers on the question of how we might rise to a genuine unified culture? This problem of the renewal of culture especially predominates in Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* and his unpublished essay *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks.* The second is a problem bequeathed directly by Schopenhauer: What value can we assign to life given the inevitability of suffering? *The Birth of Tragedy* turns to the ancient pre-Socratic Greeks to gain answers to both questions. For Nietzsche, those Greeks had the strength to admit the Schopenhauerian truth that life is inevitably painful, and yet they still had sufficient will to affirm life by beautifying it through aesthetic means. It was this beautification that according to Nietzsche was the core of tragic Greek culture which embodies the recognition that "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are . . . *justified*" (BT, Preface, § 5; see also BT, § 24.). In the course of his intellectual career Nietzsche, arguably, gave up on the Romantic quest for a renewal of culture. However, the Schopenhauerian question of the value of life remained with him even after he explicitly abandoned the Schopenhauerian metaphysics in terms of which he

originally framed the question. Indeed, to a certain extent his whole intellectual career can be seen as an attempt to find a way of affirming life in the face of Schopenhauer's pessimistic challenge. For Nietzsche, once we have followed the atheist Schopenhauer in recognizing the ubiquity of suffering and in giving up on the consolation of an afterlife, the problem of nihilism, the abject denial of life, becomes central. Schopenhauer with his explicit denial of life became for Nietzsche a paradigm of nihilism. Above all, and directly against Schopenhauer's place as the ultimate nay-sayer to life, Nietzsche positioned himself as the ultimate yes-sayer:

> I was the first to see the real opposition: –the *degenerate* instinct that turns against life with subterranean vindictiveness (–Christianity, Schopenhauer's philosophy, and in a certain sense even Plato's philosophy, the whole of idealism as typical forms) and a formula of the *highest affirmation* born out of fullness, out of overfullness, an unreserved yea-saying even to suffering, even to guilt, even to everything questionable and strange about existence.
>
> (EH, "The Birth of Tragedy," § 2)

5. The Schopenhauerian Basis to Nietzsche's Pessimism

Schopenhauer's pessimism, his no to life, is built on two claims that Nietzsche basically accepts. The first is the claim that the unchanging essence of all (living) beings is willing and willing is, and gives rise to, suffering.[12] While Nietzsche follows Schopenhauer in accepting that life invariably involves suffering, his grounds for doing so involve both Schopenhauerian and non-Schopenhauerian assumptions. As we have seen, Schopenhauer contends that life invariably involves suffering because we are constantly at the call of the will and all willing entails a painful lack of the object willed. Gaining the willed object leads to merely temporary relief – Schopenhauer has no positive account of pleasure and explicitly argues that we feel only pain and lack, not satisfaction – and if we are not immediately victims of the next willing then we experience boredom. While Nietzsche similarly maintained that we are always at the call of our drives he came to see a deeper reason for our suffering in our will-to-power. Power is the ability to overcome resistances, so in willing power we will resistances. But resistances are experienced as suffering, so in willing power we are willing suffering, or at least willing something that necessarily involves suffering. For Nietzsche, as opposed to Schopenhauer, the very notion of a good life involves the fullest expression of the will (to power) and this necessarily involves the suffering of facing, and overcoming, or possibly succumbing to, great challenges. On Schopenhauer's account a "good life" with minimal suffering is at least logically possible if, by a miracle, all one's desires were instantly satisfied.[13] But for Nietzsche a good life with minimal suffering is not even logically possible because a good life involves the suffering of facing great obstacles and resistances.[14]

The second claim on which Schopenhauer built his pessimism is the claim that the world has no ultimate telos, no meaning. While Schopenhauer tends to emphasize the first claim, the ubiquity of suffering, the second claim is important to pessimism because it entails that human suffering has no ultimate meaning. For instance, theists can concede that earthly existence is a veil of tears, yet still avoid pessimism because they believe suffering brings its eventual reward in the next life. We suffer in order to achieve

the kingdom of heaven, which is the ultimate telos for all human life. However, if life lacks such a telos there is no redemption for our suffering. For Nietzsche it is this absence of meaning more than the ubiquity of suffering that is crucial: "Man, the bravest animal and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* negate suffering in itself: he *wants* it, he even seeks it out, provided one shows him a *meaning* for it" (GM III, § 28).

How can we embrace Schopenhauer's recognition of the prevalence and pointlessness of suffering yet avoid the Schopenhauerian conclusion that suffering robs existence of positive value? Another way to put the point is: How can we embrace pessimism without embracing nihilism? Nihilism for Nietzsche is fundamentally an affective disorder involving what he calls the "the will turning *against* life" (GM, Preface, § 5).[15] This formulation is telling in that turning away from life is the very thing that Schopenhauer prescribes as a solution to the problem of suffering.

6. Diagnosing Nihilism

The key point for Nietzsche in his attempt to avoid Schopenhauer's nihilistic solution to the problem of suffering is to orient us away from the implicit hedonism in Schopenhauer's view. We can grant existence value, even if we do take suffering as inevitable and ubiquitous, provided we reject Schopenhauer's implicit assumption that the value of existence is a function of the amount of pleasure and suffering in existence. Nietzsche does this by offering other values as ultimate. For instance he sometimes simply offers life, or at least ascending – as opposed to descending or impoverished – life, as an ultimate value. Thus Nietzsche writes in his notebooks "'The sum of displeasure outweighs the sum of pleasure – consequently it would be better if the world did not exist' . . . I despise this pessimism of sensibility: it itself is a sign of impoverished life" (KSA, 13: 30).[16] In this vein, he often talks of ascending and descending life with the emphasis on the former as a value that is "extraordinary (*ausserordentlich*)" (TI, "Expeditions of an Untimely Man," § 33). At other times it seems that what Nietzsche values most highly is not so much life as great, creative individuals, so called "higher men."[17]

When Nietzsche rebukes Schopenhauer for "staying stuck in precisely those Christian and ascetic moral perspectives" there are three things he has, mainly, in mind here. There is the Christian emphasis on the importance of suffering. There is the Christian ideal that in the face of suffering morality demands compassion (*Mitleid*) as the highest virtue. There is the Christian ideal that asceticism is a means for an escape from the will and suffering.

Regarding the desire to escape suffering Nietzsche actually contemplates the possibility of embracing suffering as a means to creativity. Thus in *Beyond Good and Evil* he poses the rhetorical question "The discipline of suffering, of *great* suffering – don't you know that *this* discipline has been the sole cause of every enhancement in humanity so far?" (BGE, § 225). What Nietzsche advocates is the replacement of suffering as our ultimate concern with creativity and the enhancement of life as our ultimate concern. The mistake he attributes to Schopenhauer and received moralities in general is that they overestimate the importance of suffering:

> Hedonism, pessimism, utilitarianism, eudaimonianism: these are all ways of thinking that measure the value of things according to *pleasure* and *pain*, which is to say according to incidental states and trivialities. They are all foreground ways of thinking and naïvetés, and nobody who is conscious of both *formative* powers and an artist's conscience will fail to regard them with scorn as well as pity [*Mitleid*].
>
> (BGE, § 225)

Where the absence of suffering and the presence of pleasure are for Schopenhauer implicitly accorded the status of ends in themselves, Nietzsche accords them merely instrumental value, and even instrumental disvalue. Thus suffering that leads to an enhancement of life is accorded a positive value, whereas suffering that leads to life denial is according a negative value.

Regarding Schopenhauer's high estimation of the value of compassion, Nietzsche tells us that

> people have [made] it [compassion] into *the* virtue, the foundation and source of all virtues, – but of course you always have to keep in mind that this was the perspective of a nihilistic philosophy that inscribed *the negation of life* on its shield. Schopenhauer was right here: compassion negates life, it makes life *worthy of negation*, – *compassion* is the *practice* of nihilism.
>
> (AC, § 7)[18]

Nietzsche's objection to compassion is twofold. First, he regards it as elevating suffering to import beyond its due. Second, and relatedly, he sees it as a means of elevating herd happiness and hence favoring the lowest levels of life. Thus he warns

> What is to be feared, what has a doomful effect such as no other doom, would not be the great fear but rather the great *disgust* at man; likewise the great *compassion* for man. Supposing that these two should mate one day, then immediately something of the most uncanny nature would unavoidably come into this world, the 'last will' of man, his will to nothingness, nihilism . . . The *diseased* are man's greatest danger: *not* the evil, *not* the 'beasts of prey'. Those who from the outset are failed, downcast, broken – they are the ones, the *weakest* are the ones who most undermine life among humans, who most dangerously poison and call into question our confidence in life, in man, in ourselves.
>
> (GM III, § 14)[19]

7. Diagnosing Asceticism

Regarding asceticism Nietzsche sees it, as advocated by the Christian and Schopenhauer, as simply a means of escaping life. Since for Schopenhauer willing entails suffering and suffering robs existence of value, Schopenhauer prescribes an escape from willing. This for Schopenhauer is in fact part of the value of compassion. By focusing on the concerns of others I quiet my own will. The difference between Schopenhauer and the Christian is that the latter believes that compassion will eventually bring him the reward in the next life of having his individual will fulfilled, whereas for the atheist Schopenhauer

the value of compassion is that it is a means to escape one's individual will, and to escape the illusion of individuation. Both the Christian and Schopenhauer evince a strong aversion to our earthly life. Hence they embrace the ascetic ideal as a means for turning away from life. Nietzsche regards such denial of the will as a "defamation and slander" of life – life itself being Nietzsche's highest value. For Nietzsche Schopenhauer's high regard for contemplative knowledge is simply another manifestation of his life-denying asceticism. Schopenhauer favorably spoke of the intellect "abolishing all possibility of suffering" (WWR II, 368) when it renounces all interest and becomes "the clear mirror of the world" (WWR II, 380). Nietzsche expressly addresses this passive notion of mirroring and its attendant overestimation of the value of truth and objectivity in by referring to "the objective man . . . the *ideal* scholar" as "a mirror: he is used to subordinating himself in front of anything that wants to be known, without any other pleasure than that of knowing, of 'mirroring forth' ('*Abspiegeln*')" (BGE, § 207). Later in the same section he refers to the scholar as a "mirror-like soul . . . forever smoothing itself out." In the very next section Nietzsche tells us that "'objectivity' . . . 'scientificity' . . . is merely dressed-up skepticism and paralysis of the will." This theme is repeated in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in the sections "Of Immaculate Perception" and "Of Scholars." In the first of these sections Zarathustra characterizes those who seek pure knowledge as hypocrites, on the grounds that while they are men of earthly lusts they have "been persuaded to contempt of the earthly." Again, Nietzsche has recourse to Schopenhauer's metaphors of passive mirroring, when he expresses the voice of those seekers of pure knowledge as follows: "For me, the highest thing would be to gaze at life without desire . . . I desire nothing of things, except that I may lie down before them like a mirror with a hundred eyes" (Z II, "Of Immaculate Perception").

The metaphor of the scholar as mirror is used in the *Genealogy*. There, in describing modern historiography, which he characterizes as being "to a high degree ascetic" and "to a still higher degree *nihilistic*," Nietzsche says modern historiography's "most noble claim now runs in the direction of being a *mirror*" (GM III, § 26). Where the religious ascetic attempts to remove himself from the torments of this world, a world that largely resists his desires, telling himself that what happens in this life is ultimately unimportant, the modern scholar similarly removes himself from life by telling himself that what is of ultimate value is not acting in this world, not what he does, but his understanding of the world, or what he knows. Both the religious ascetic and the ascetic scholar believe, as it were, that "the truth will set you free." Nietzsche claims that here to be free means to be free of the pull of this world, the tumult of earthly passions and desires. Just as the ascetic ideal demands suppression of the passions, so the scholar's emphasis on objectivity and truth demands that "the affects become cool" (GM III, § 25). Where the religious take revenge upon the world by denying that it is of ultimate importance, the scholar revenges himself by saying that passive understanding is of greater value than "mere" action. The secular man of the Enlightenment values reasons and reasonable belief and is suspicious of passions and unreasoned desire. But life, at least genuine life, ultimately is a world of passions and desires. Thus, claims Nietzsche, (the pursuit of) science can act as a means of withdrawal from the world: "Science as a means of self-anaesthetization: *are you acquainted with that?*" (GM III, § 23; emphasis Nietzsche's).

Indeed Nietzsche had in earlier works already claimed that such repression of passions, as exhibited in the scholar, is part of a death drive. In *The Gay Science*, in a passage

that Nietzsche explicitly directs us to in section 28 of the third essay of the *Genealogy*, he characterizes the will not to be deceived as something that might be "a principle that is hostile to life and destructive. 'Will to truth' – that could be a hidden will to death" (GS, § 344). In the same place he tells us that "those who are truthful in that audacious and ultimate sense which faith in science presupposes *thereby affirm another world* than that of life, nature, and history" (Nietzsche's italics).

These thoughts Nietzsche first fully thematized in his early work the *Untimely Meditations*. There, in the second essay, "On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life," he characterizes "the scholar, the man of science" as one who "stands aside from life so as to know it unobstructedly" (UM II, § 10). Focusing on the use of history, Nietzsche contrasts his demand that we use history for "life and action" with the scholar's use of history "so as to turn comfortably away from life and action" (UM II, Foreword). Nietzsche pictures "the historical virtuoso of the present day" as "a passive sounding-board" whose tone and message "lulls us and makes of us tame spectators" (UM II, § 6.). It is the desire to stand aside from life that links the scholar and the priests as practitioners of the ascetic ideal. Schopenhauer's expressed advocacy of being a mere passive mirror of the world, his contention that knowledge of the true essence of the world sets one free from the chains of willing mark him for Nietzsche as a paradigm advocate of a secularized version of the ascetic ideal.

8. The Appeal of Nietzsche's Values

If Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's pessimism because he does not share Schopenhauer's emphasis on the negative import of suffering, does this not make his stance intrinsically unattractive? As Mill and others have noted, we all have a natural inclination to care greatly about at least our own happiness, where happiness here is understood to involve, at the least, the absence of suffering. Now it does little good for Nietzsche to point out that our obsession with happiness and the absence of suffering is itself partly a product of the victory of slave morality. For as slave morality is, by Nietzsche's own lights, totally triumphant, this simply means that we have no alternative perspective from which to re-evaluate the importance of suffering in the manner Nietzsche seems to advocate. Nietzsche avoids Schopenhauer's pessimism by valuing life and creativity above happiness and the absence of suffering. But why does this not simply leave us in the position of saying "Well, you Nietzsche may value those things but why should we? And in particular why should we follow you and elevate them to supreme values?" Some have argued that Nietzsche fully realizes that his ideas can have no logical purchase on those imbued with the received morality. Indeed, for the vast majority of people it seems Nietzsche is happy for them to languish in what he calls "herd morality."[20] Those who take Nietzsche to be offering a frankly external critique of morality argue that Nietzsche attempts to unsettle the grip of that morality, at least on a selective few, by various rhetorical arts, for instance by showing that morality has, or at least had, immoral origins.[21] On this view Nietzsche is often intentionally committing the genetic fallacy of arguing against the current value of X by pointing out X's sordid origins.

Alternatively, we might argue that much of Nietzsche's critique of morality is based on values internal to that morality. For instance, his claim that many of our original

and, arguably, continuing motivations for adopting the morality of compassion are unseemly and dishonest appeals to conventional morality's high regard for honesty about and integrity in our motivations.[22] As for his appeals to such values as creativity and ascending life, while they might not appeal to anything specifically in the morality of compassion, they may still have resonance to many who are followers of that morality, since adherents of that morality do not necessarily have all their values determined by it. Nietzsche sometimes argues that in "mixed cultures" (BGE, § 260) such as our own there still remain vestiges of the old noble morality that put such a high regard on creativity and individual flourishing rather than herd happiness (BGE, § 260).[23] So even if appeals to such values are external to the values of the morality of compassion, they are not external to all our actual (mixed) values.

We have seen that Nietzsche could avoid Schopenhauer's pessimism, even while endorsing Schopenhauer's views about the prevalence of suffering, by jettisoning Schopenhauer's assumption that suffering robs existence of all value, and endorsing the possibility of local as opposed to global meaning. This is not to say that Nietzsche saw himself as an optimist. Indeed he deliberately avoided that term, for he identified it with the Socratic and Enlightenment notions of human progress. Nietzsche opposes optimism on two grounds, one descriptive and one normative. The descriptive ground is his rejection of the optimist's claim that human suffering can be ameliorated, even abolished, through knowledge. Here Nietzsche sides firmly with Schopenhauer. The normative ground is that it would be a good thing to abolish suffering. Rather he characterized himself in terms of what he calls "Dionysian pessimism" (GS, § 370). The chief trait of Nietzsche's Dionysian pessimism is that, while recognizing the "terrible and questionable" (GS, § 370) in life, it is still able to affirm life. In particular it affirms life as a world of becoming, even where that encompasses death, destruction and decomposition.

We saw above that Schopenhauer countenanced two types of possible life-affirmation. In reflective affirmation life is willed "with knowledge," and in unreflective affirmation it is willed "without knowledge and as blind impulse." Nietzsche's texts similarly offer both an unreflective and a reflective account of affirmation. These nobles, the blond beasts of the first essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*, affirm life by living it in a direct expressive way. Here the contrast is with the slaves who repress and deny their most basic drives. On this account to affirm life is to give full and complete expression to one's drives. But Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, also offers a reflective account of affirmation. On this account to affirm life is to step back from it, reflect upon it, and then endorse it in all its details. It is this kind of reflective affirmation that is exemplified in Nietzsche's writings on eternal recurrence, a concept of affirmation we have seen already expressed by Schopenhauer. It is clearly naïve affirmation Nietzsche has in mind when he says "in all productive men it is instinct that is the creative-affirmative force, and consciousness acts critically and dissuasively" (BT, § 13.). Indeed, this quotation expresses the idea that, contra Schopenhauer's account, reflection is somehow antithetical to genuine affirmation. An idea that may also be drawn from other sources in Nietzsche:

> Judgments, value judgments on life, for or against, can ultimately never be true: they have value only as symptoms, they can be taken seriously only as symptoms – in themselves

> judgments like these are stupidities. . . . It is an objection to a philosopher if he sees a problem with the *value* of life, it is a question mark on his wisdom, an un-wisdom.
>
> (TI, "The Problem of Socrates," § 2)[24]

The tension between Nietzsche's account of unreflective affirmation and his account of reflective affirmation can be resolved by noting that unreflective affirmation seems to be a state Nietzsche attributes to an earlier stage of human history while reflective affirmation is what Nietzsche seems to be recommending for creatures such as ourselves who are victims of the two thousand year of self-vivisection that the Judeo-Christian heritage has encumbered us with. Perhaps then Nietzsche's idea is that for us moderns naïve affirmation is no longer possible and the best we can aim for is reflective affirmation, with the idea that one day, a long time in the future, we may again be capable of naïve affirmation or even a combination of naïve and reflective affirmation. As Nietzsche says, "We have to *learn to think differently* – in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: *to feel differently*" (D, § 103).

While Nietzsche is incredibly astute in his psychological observations about human nature, hence his masterful diagnosis of the impulse to asceticism and to nihilism in general, he is less acute in his suggestions for a cure for this nihilism despite his own occasional bravura claim to himself have lived through and overcome nihilism. The fact that Nietzsche sometimes says such things as "some day I want only to be a Yes-sayer" (GS, § 276) as opposed to his more common emphatic boasts that he is a yes saying spirit, along with the fact that Nietzsche generally characterizes himself as one who destroys old idols – as is appropriate to the time he lives in – so that others later, perhaps much later, might erect new, more affirming ones, suggests that Nietzsche himself had an intimation that he had not fully solved the problem of how to affirm life.[25] The problematic teachings of *amor fati*, the eternal recurrence, and the overman are all parts of Nietzsche's not totally successful attempt to carve out a clear account of how genuine life-affirmation might again be possible.

Nietzsche's works, despite their bravado attempts in presenting an affirmative spirit, still evoke a deeply pessimistic note, at least about the vast majority of mankind. The early Nietzsche began with the old romantic concern of how Germany was to develop a genuine, as opposed to a philistine, culture and voiced at least guarded optimism on this score. Nevertheless Nietzsche slowly came to realize the depth of the forces that prevented the development of such a culture. By the time of his last works he came to believe that Judeo-Christian morality had left such a deep scar on the modern soul that the inevitable nihilism resulting from this wound negated the possibly of a general elevated culture and at most would allow for certain gifted individuals to rise above the inevitable morass of mediocrity that nihilism leaves in its wake. This kind of pessimism was not novel to the nineteenth century. Figures such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Hippolyte Taine and even the superficially optimistic John Stuart Mill were equally aware that the coming democratic, materialistic, age brought with it the prospect of the triumph and possibly domination of philistine culture. Nietzsche more than these others came to the deeply pessimistic, and some might add, deeply prescient, conclusion that it was an inevitability. One of his deepest fears was that those few individuals capable of rising above philistine culture and its superficial optimism would be seduced by the nihilistic siren song of Schopenhauerian pessimism and its cult of life denial.

See also 6 Schopenhauer's Philosophy of the Dark Origin; 8 Schopenhauer on Sex, Love and Emotions; 15 Schopenhauer and the Objectivity of Art; 22 Schopenhauer's Impact on European Literature; 23 Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner; 25 Schopenhauer's Fairy Tale about Fichte: The Origin of *The World as Will and Representation* in German Idealism.

Notes

1 For various reflections on the Schopenhauer–Nietzsche relationship, see Janaway 1998, which includes a catalogue of Nietzsche's published references to Schopenhauer (266–77). See also Janaway (2007, esp. chs. 4 and 11).

2 Cf. two passages in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human*: the way to achieve the simultaneous "critique" and "intensifying" of pessimism Nietzsche claims to perform is through "moral scepticism and destructive analysis," but Schopenhauer, by contrast, is driven by a "blind will to morality" (HA II, Preface, § 1; HA I, Preface, § 1).

3 We cite Schopenhauer in Payne's translations, unless otherwise stated. We occasionally make small changes to Payne's vocabulary, the chief change being "will to life" for *Wille zum Leben*, replacing Payne's "will-to-live."

4 See Nietzsche's pointed allusion to this notion in GM III, § 12, and discussion in Janaway 1998, 27–36; also Janaway 2007, 193–202.

5 E.g., how Schopenhauer can claim knowledge of the thing-in-itself if knowledge is limited to representation, whether indeed he means to claim that the will is the thing-in-itself or rather the unifying essence of what falls within representation (on which see esp. WWR II, 196–8), how, beyond space and time, there can be *my* will as an intelligible character distinct from other intelligible characters, and how the will could be thought of as acting outside of space, time and causality.

6 For Nietzsche's later view on Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will see, e.g., GS, § 99. For his earlier views, see BT, § 1, 6, 16, but also the early notes "On Schopenhauer (1868)," translated as Appendix 1 in Janaway 1998, 258–65, and for discussion Janaway 1998, 18–27.

7 We are supposed to think that, while the individual has no freedom at all, the will in itself, existing beyond space, time, and causality, is "absolutely free and entirely self-determining" – so much so that it can reverse direction and annul its own self-expression. See WWR I, 285, 286–8, 300–1, 386, 402. But then how can it be that knowledge *acts* upon the will to cause it to reverse direction?

8 See WWR I, 404 (though Payne translates *Selbstaufhebung* slightly more tamely as "self-suppression").

9 This is not to deny that suffering may ultimately have good results. Extreme suffering may, claims Schopenhauer, cause us to turn against the will, and turning against the will is for Schopenhauer the ultimate solution to the problem of suffering. That X causes some good Y, does not entail that Y is X's telos.

10 Note, however, that in order of exposition Schopenhauer presents 2 as a generalization from 6 (WWR I, 99–110).

11 See notes from 1813 in MR I, 43–44, 48–57.

12 While Nietzsche came to repudiate Schopenhauer's transcendental notion of the will, he continued to talk of drives (*Triebe*). Drives for Nietzsche played a role analogous to Schopenhauer's individual willings, as the, often unconscious, springs of all human actions. Furthermore, in his posit of the will-to-power he, arguably, returned to a more transcendental

concept akin to Schopenhauer's will. The controversial question of Nietzsche's commitment to will-to-power as an ultimate explanatory force is something we cannot enter into here.

13 While this for Schopenhauer would be a conventionally, or we might say, superficially, good life, it would of course be short of his ideal of the best, presumably unachievable, life, which would be one where the will has been totally quieted or denied.

14 This explanation of the will-to-power and its relation to suffering is taken from Reginster (2006).

15 Reginster (2006) identifies two more cognitive varieties of nihilism. The nihilism of disorientation is the claim that there are not ultimate values. The nihilism of despair is the claim that our ultimate values cannot be realized in this, the one and only, world. In "Nihilism and the Affirmation of Life: A Review of and Dialogue with Bernard Reginster," Gemes (2009) argues that, for Nietzsche, at a fundamental level, nihilism must be a disorder of the drives rather than a consciously held doctrine.

16 In this note Nietzsche is specifically referring to the pessimism of "such a meagre ape as Hartmann." Eduard von Hartmann was a chief popularizer of Schopenhauer's pessimism.

17 The value of higher men is emphasized by Leiter (2002, ch. 4). As Leiter observes (2002, 125–26), in as much as ascending life is what is exemplified in higher men, there may be no difference in saying that Nietzsche ultimately values ascending life and saying he ultimately values higher men.

18 The English text translates Nietzsche's term "Mitleid" as "pity." We have corrected it to "compassion" since in the passage cited Nietzsche is dealing with Schopenhauer and for Schopenhauer, at least in the context of the argument for denial of life, "Mitleid" clearly means compassion rather than pity. However in other cases Nietzsche's use of "Mitleid" often seem best translated as pity. This raises the possibility that Nietzsche is often talking past Schopenhauer. For more on this, see Von Tevenar 2007.

19 For more on Nietzsche on the dangers of compassion, see Janaway 2007.

20 In this vein he says "The ideas of the herd should rule in the herd – but not reach out beyond it" (KSA, 12:273).

21 This is the line taken in Leiter 2002.

22 Gemes (2006) argues that while Nietzsche appears in the *On the Genealogy of Morality* to be talking about the origins of our morality, he is in fact telling us deeply unsettling truths about the currents motivations and meaning of our morality.

23 But also see HA I, § 45, and GM I, § 16.

24 While Nietzsche here is explicitly thinking of Socrates, it is clear he would equally apply this to Schopenhauer.

25 Even in his most megalomaniac moments Nietzsche sometimes registers the fact that he is principally a destroyer of idols, one whose destructive deeds may one day prove to be beneficial. Thus in section 2 of the EH chapter entitled "Why I Am a Destiny" he says: "I am by far the most terrible human being who has ever existed; this does mean that I will not be the most charitable. I know the joy of *destruction* to a degree proportionate to my *strength* for destruction. – In both cases I obey my Dionysian nature, which does not know how to separate doing no from saying yes. I am the first *immoralist*: which makes me the *destroyer par excellence*."

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20

Schopenhauer on the Inevitability of Unhappiness

IVAN SOLL

Schopenhauer's denial of the possibility of attaining true happiness, his infamous *pessimism*, has often been used by others to characterize his philosophy as a whole or to define its center. The prominence accorded this aspect of Schopenhauer's thought is not surprising, considering the crucial role it plays in his overall system. He argues that the impossibility of happiness is the direct and ineluctable consequence of his central metaphysical thesis, that we human beings are essentially, in our deepest nature and entire being, will and nothing but *will*.

According to this view: (1) the will and all of its activities, such as, desiring, wanting, striving, trying to achieve specific goals, or groping toward dimly sensed ends, constitute not just one among several aspects of human life, but its essential activity and nature; consequently (2) willing and its conative cousins, desiring, wanting, striving, acting, etc., are the most fundamental forms of mental activity; and (3) other forms of mental activity, such as perception and comprehension, are developed primarily as means or tools for the activities of the will.

Schopenhauer claims that to live is principally to will, and that willing, since it is the very essence and being of what we are, cannot be avoided or suspended. Willing for Schopenhauer is not just one of the fundamental things that human beings do, but what essentially and entirely constitutes what they are.

The third book of *The World as Will and Representation* is in large part devoted to Schopenhauer's theory of aesthetic experience and art. It is here that he first presents his view that we are condemned to unhappiness as a direct and unavoidable consequence of our basic nature as beings whose essential nature is constituted by our will, that is by our willing (see WWR I, § 37). He presents our involvement with art and aesthetic experience as primarily motivated by their ability to offer some sort of limited amelioration of the generally unhappy condition of human life. Moreover, the fourth and last book of his major work is also devoted to a discussion of various strategies for denying the will in order to escape or at least diminish the unhappiness that inevitably

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accompanies the activity of willing, wanting or desiring. So the last two of the four books of *The World as Will and Representation* are devoted in large part to the problem of the human unhappiness and its amelioration.

1. Schopenhauer on the Inevitability of Suffering

One of the most clear, concise and complete statements of Schopenhauer's arguments against the possibility of happiness in human life occurs in Book 4, § 57, of *The World as Will and Representation*:

> We have already seen in nature-without-knowledge her inner being as a constant striving without aim and without rest, and this stands out much more distinctly when we consider the animal or man. Willing and striving are its whole essence, and can be fully compared to an unquenchable thirst. The basis of all willing, however, is need, lack, and hence pain. If, on the other hand, it lacks objects of willing, because it is at once deprived of them by too easy a satisfaction, a fearful emptiness and boredom come over it; in other words, its being and existence become an intolerable burden for it. Hence its life swings like a pendulum to and fro between pain and boredom, and these two are in fact its ultimate constituents. This has been expressed very quaintly by saying that, after man had placed all pains and torments in hell, there was nothing left for heaven but boredom.
>
> (WWR I, 311–12)

By *nature-without-knowledge* Schopenhauer seems to be referring to the part of nature that has no consciousness; the realm of inorganic matter and perhaps also the world of plants. Even these, he argues, are to be understood as "constantly striving" wills "without aim and without rest," but Schopenhauer's problematic extension of the notions of *willing* and *striving* to the non-human and non-animal realms is not our concern here, for our focus is primarily upon the question of the happiness or unhappiness of human beings.

More relevant are two of Schopenhauer's claims in combination: (1) his claim that the "inner being" and indeed "whole essence" of humans is "a constant striving without aim and without rest," and (2) that "the basis of all willing is need, lack, and hence pain." If indeed our *inner being* and *whole essence* is *a constant striving without aim or rest*, it does not seem that we can ever escape or suspend this striving. And if to desire is *ipso facto* to suffer, then it seems that we are condemned to constantly experience need, lack and thus pain. This is perhaps Schopenhauer's most central argument against the possibility of happiness.

This argument, when it is unpacked, seems to be that, while one is striving for something, one does not yet, by definition, have what one wants; that striving by its very nature entails not having what one strives for, at least while one is striving for it. For the argument to have any cogency at all, it must be understood, though Schopenhauer neglects to state it, that one not only need or lack what one is striving for but also *feel* this need or lack, because the *awareness of the need or lack* is required both to motivate the striving and create the suffering. One must be *aware of a lack* to suffer the lack in a way that seems to entail that one thereby suffers, that is, experiences some sort of pain. Schopenhauer claims that, if and when one's striving is successful and one attains the

object of one's striving, the satisfaction is fleeting and quickly passes over into boredom, which is also a kind of suffering. Thus life, even according to the best possible scenario, in which it consists of a series of successful strivings and fulfilled desires, appears to be a dismal alternation between the suffering of feeling the lack of what one is trying to attain and the suffering of the boredom that sets in promptly upon attaining it. In constructing his unhappy vision of human life, Schopenhauer does not rely much upon the fact that we do not always get what we want, and many people get very little of what they want, because he wants to make the more radical point that, *even if we did get everything we wanted, our lives would still be filled with suffering.*

2. Criticisms of Schopenhauer's Thesis that to Desire Is to Suffer

The first point in Schopenhauer's argument that requires critical scrutiny is the claim that we can only desire or strive for what we feel that we lack. This claim seems at first glance cogent and plausible, since one cannot meaningfully *strive* to achieve what one has already achieved. Yet though it seems incoherent to *strive* to achieve what is already the case, it not as clear that we cannot *want* or *desire* what is already the case. We often say that we are just where we want to be, or doing exactly what we want to be doing, or spending our time with just the person with whom we want to be spending our time. But if Schopenhauer's thesis holds only for striving, and not for wanting and desiring, then it does not hold for all cases of willing, and thus does not support his argument that all willing springs from a sense of lack. If one can want, will, or desire what is already the case, then it does not seem that all willing arises from a lack, and thus not all willing can be tied to the suffering of a lack and thus to suffering. Defenders of Schopenhauer's view might try to interpret statements of wanting what is the case as elliptical expressions for the idea of *wanting to continue* to do what one is doing. This would allow one to try to save the idea that one can only want something that is not now the case, by pointing out, that, in these sorts of examples, what one wants is *not yet* the case: that all desires about the future, even desires that it remain in certain ways like the present, aim at ends that are not yet present.

There are, however, at least two serious difficulties with this defense: First, being exactly where one wants to be at the present time, or doing exactly what one wants to be doing at the present time, or being with just the person one wants to be with at the present time, does not necessarily mean that one wants these situations to continue into the future. To want to be where I am does not mean that I necessarily want to stay here; I may be halfway through a task or a journey on schedule and want to move on. To be now doing exactly what I want to be doing now does not mean that I want to continue doing it; I may be finishing up an enjoyable task that I want to bring to a close. To want to be with the person one is with now does not mean that one necessarily wants to stay with that person; he or she may be the best person one can imagine to be with the present situation, but not someone with whom one wants to spend one's entire life or even a lot of one's life.

Second, even in those cases, in which I do want to continue in a present condition, to stay in my present location, occupation or relationship, this wish may not emerge from a lack, but from a present state of satisfaction. When a person enjoying excellent

health desires to remain in excellent health, or when a wealthy person, presently enjoying his wealth, wishes to remain wealthy, what is supposed to be the lack that motivates the desire? It has been argued that the desire to be as healthy in the future as I am now does not emerge from a lack (see Cartwright 1988, 58, n.9). A defender of the Schopenhauerian view might counter, however, that it is the lack of what is not yet the case that motivates the desire. To this reply, it might be objected that this is an extremely tenuous sense of *lack*, not a lack that exists now or even will necessarily exist in the future, but only a future contingency, something that only may be the case in the future. But in the context of our concerns, we need not become involved in abstruse debates about whether an as yet unrealized future contingency constitutes a present lack. For even if an only possible future lack were still to be considered a lack, if only in some extremely tenuous sense, it does not seem to be the sort of lack that would or should cause us any suffering.

More importantly, we do not necessarily suffer even from present lacks. There is, admittedly, a *non-experiential sense* of "suffering a lack," in which one "suffers" any lack, but this is irrelevant, and misleading with respect to the issue at hand. To say, in this sense, that one "suffers a lack" of something means nothing more than that one lacks something. Perhaps because we do really and regularly *experience suffering* from many sorts of lacks, we have taken to using the expression, "to suffer a lack," when we mean nothing more than *to lack*. This usage unfortunately begs the philosophical issue facing us: while it is incontestable that we often *really suffer* our lacks, in that we *really suffer from them* or *suffer because of them*, it seems not to be true that we really suffer from all of our lacks, or that to lack anything is necessarily to suffer because of this lack.

Often our lacks cause us no real suffering. First, there are those lacks of which we never even become aware. During an automobile trip I may lack the protection of a spare tire because mine is flat, but I do not know this and have no occasion to make use of it. Since I do not even experience such lacks, I do not *suffer from them* in any experiential sense, that is, in any sense that is directly relevant to my happiness. Then, there are those of my lacks of which I become aware, but which do not cause me to desire their removal. After reading about a man who has the ability to ingest a grotesquely large quantity of sausages in one hour, it occurs to me that I lack the capacity to do that, but this thought in no way leads me to wish that I had that capacity – and clearly not to any suffering because I lack that capacity. However, these sorts of cases do not present any great difficulties to Schopenhauer's position. He only has to show that those lacks of which we are aware and do give rise to desires are necessarily experienced with suffering. Therefore, he could easily rule out those lacks of which we are unaware or which do not motivate us to remove them. The question remains: do we always suffer in experiencing those lacks of ours that we want to remove?

Think about all of those experiences in which we are making good progress toward some goal. Do we necessarily, or even usually, suffer during the process simply because we are not yet at our goal? When taking a pleasant walk from one place to another, do we in any way suffer during the walk simply from the fact that we are not yet at our desired destination? With respect to any journey to a desired destination, "getting there is (or can be) half the fun." Schopenhauer's view would have the absurd consequence that there would be no pleasant journeys, only the satisfaction of reaching one's destination.

Admittedly, we do tend to suffer in striving for goals when this striving occurs under certain negative conditions: when the goal proves to be unattainable, or achieving it reveals itself to be unlikely, or our progress toward it seems insignificant, or "painfully slow," or disproportionately laborious or costly. Schopenhauer's claim, that all striving toward a goal, directly entails suffering, depends upon an unjustified generalization from these negative cases of willing to all cases of willing. Whatever initial plausibility his thesis may possess depends upon unjustifiably taking the negative scenarios of desiring and striving as typical of all cases.

Schopenhauer's position entails that all willed action directed toward a goal, even action that proceeds with so little effort that we would probably not consider it to be "striving," is experienced as a sort of pain. His thesis, that all willing is suffering, is patently implausible with respect to the cases of willed action that do not entail a significant amount of resistance and effort. Again his argument relies on an unjustified assumption that all of willed action can be viewed as a kind of striving. But even with respect to cases of *striving in its proper sense*, that is, action in which substantial effort is required, the effort is not necessarily experienced as suffering. As Nietzsche was wont to point out repeatedly, we often enjoy the experience of achieving ends that require effort and overcoming difficulties, not only despite the effort endured and difficulties overcome, but often because of them. For it is principally through the experience of doing what we find difficult, that we experience the extent of our powers, and the experience of our powers certainly seems to be at least one of our basic satisfactions.

3. The Unattainability of True Satisfaction

To argue that human life, which is essentially a life of desiring and striving, is inevitably and unrelievedly unhappy, Schopenhauer must argue not only that the state of desiring and striving is always one of suffering, but also that there can be no *real satisfaction* of this desiring:

> All *willing* springs from lack, from deficiency, and thus from suffering. . . . No attained object of willing can give a satisfaction that lasts and no longer declines; but it is always like the alms thrown to a beggar, which reprieves him today so that his misery may be prolonged until tomorrow. Therefore, so long as our consciousness is filled by our will, so long as we are given up to the throng of desires with its constant hopes and fears, so long as we are the subject of willing, we never obtain lasting happiness or peace. . . . care for the constantly demanding will, no matter in what form, constantly fills consciousness; but without peace and calm, true well being is absolutely impossible. Thus the subject of willing is constantly lying on the revolving wheel of Ixion, is always drawing water in the sieve of the Danaids, and is the eternally thirsting Tantalus.
>
> (WWR I, 196)

Schopenhauer's argument relies upon equating the real satisfaction of desire with lasting satisfaction. This idea possesses an initial plausibility: when considering particular cases of desires, strivings, and satisfactions, some putative satisfactions of desires may be too fleeting to deserve to be considered as real satisfactions of these desires. For example, if after having long desired to visit Rome, I manage to go there; but, because

of a medical emergency, I am forced to return home after just one day, it makes to consider my truncated visit too brief to be a true satisfaction of my desire. If I spend months or years fully occupied in the process of winning the love of someone, who indeed does come to love me – but only for a week or a weekend, I might justifiably feel that this does not really satisfy my desire.

What counts, however, as *long enough* or *too short* with respect to such purported satisfactions of desires is obviously going to vary from case to case. It will depend both upon how long the particular satisfaction lasts and how long I wanted or expected it to last. These two considerations will clearly vary from case to case, and they will depend upon what sort of goal it is and the amount of time, effort and resources invested in its pursuit. The notion of a satisfaction of a desire that is too brief to be a real satisfaction is a meaningful one, but its meaningfulness is dependent upon the particulars of the case. The meaningfulness of our notion of a satisfaction that is too short to be a real satisfaction also depends upon there actually being some satisfactions that last long enough to count as real satisfactions. And there are many that do – even though they do not last forever. It makes more sense to complain that half an hour after eating a meal I was hungry again than it does to complain that I was hungry again the next day.

Relying upon the cogency of this legitimate, context-bound notion of a satisfaction that is too brief to be a real satisfaction, Schopenhauer tries to de-contextualize it, suggesting that any satisfaction that ever comes to an end, no matter how long it lasts, is not a lasting or real satisfaction. On Schopenhauer's view, a lasting and thus real satisfaction is one that never ends. Surely this is an inflexible, hyperbolic and unjustified extension of the much more modest, flexible and realistic demand for duration that we place upon what is to count as the satisfaction of our desires.

Schopenhauer claims that "the satisfaction that one finally gets is *only apparent*," because "the wish fulfilled at once makes way for a new one" (WWR I, 196). He thus implies that the satisfaction we hope for *in every desire* is one that will *remove all further wants and desires*. The inevitable occurrence of further desires is supposed to reveal that what appears to be the satisfaction of a desire is only a "delusion." This idea is wildly at odds with our actual attitudes and reactions. Sometimes we may harbor the foggy and unrealistic notion that the fulfillment of a particular desire would somehow make us content and happy forever. I might think that, if only I had that wonderful job, or that wonderful mate, I would have everything necessary to my contentment and happiness. Such notions are usually ill-conceived, and they are not typically attached to our desires. Normally we do not expect the satisfaction of a single desire to put an end to all of our desiring, nor even to desires of the same sort. Even if, as Schopenhauer claims, "no attained object of willing can give a satisfaction that lasts [forever] and no longer declines" (WWR I, 196), there are, nevertheless, some satisfactions that last long enough to be really satisfying.

One might try to save Schopenhauer's patently implausible view by distinguishing between *what we expect* and *what we really want*, that is, what we would want if only it were possible. One could then attempt to defend Schopenhauer's thesis as representing what we really want as the ideal outcome as opposed to what we realistically expect and settle for. This more modest variant cannot represent Schopenhauer's actual view, for it is only if we actually expected each satisfaction to last forever, that the appearance

of further desires would reveal the previous apparent satisfaction to have been, as he claims, a "delusion."

Moreover, even the more modest version is indefensible. It is simply not true that we would want ideally that the satisfaction of our desire would prevent the occurrence of further desires or even of the same sort of desire. Would we really want – if it were possible – to satisfy our hunger for food so that we were never hungry again? Would we want, even if it were possible, to satisfy our desire for sex, or for travel, or for seeing beautiful works of art, or for many other things, so that our interest in and desire for these things was permanently assuaged and we never again had any desire for them? Clearly not!

What these thought experiments show is that, contrary to Schopenhauer, we do not view our desires simply as negative conditions, like cancerous tumors, which we simply want to remove, and, if possible, to remove permanently. Although we can be tormented by desires that cannot be satisfied, or satisfied regularly and easily enough, even in the normal, modest, non-Schopenhauerian sense of satisfaction, we still generally prize our desires themselves, and not just their satisfaction. We regularly lament the loss of our appetite for food, or sex, or other human involvements. Though on Schopenhauer's view it seems impossible, perverse, or wildly imprudent, *we clearly do find our desires themselves desirable* and justifiably so (see Soll 1989).

Schopenhauer might respond that any positive attitude toward our desires themselves, even if common, is totally mistaken. This would be consonant with his broader thesis that the common idea that a happy life is possible and is a life in which one pursues one's desires with a fair amount of success, is totally mistaken. To see more clearly that our prizing of our desires themselves is not mistaken, we must realize that Schopenhauer's tendency to equate the satisfaction of a desire with its removal, is untenable. Although satisfying a desire most often entails removing the desire, at least temporarily, the satisfaction of a desire cannot be equated with its removal. My hunger for food or sex can be removed not only by its satisfaction but also in other ways, for example, by stress, fear, or diversion of attention. To experience the satisfaction of a desire, the desire must first exist and then be removed specifically by satisfying it and not in some other way. This is the reason we are not obviously mistaken in valuing our desires, or in having a positive attitude toward *a life of desire*, that is, a life which is constituted, in great part, by the pursuit of one's desires, and in which one values and enjoys one's desires as well as their satisfaction.

4. The Inevitability of Boredom

Another plank in Schopenhauer's pessimistic platform is that the attainment of our desires not only fails to satisfy us fully, but also brings in its wake the almost immediate onset of boredom, which is also a form of suffering. Recall that he claims:

> If, on the other hand, it lacks objects of willing because it is at once deprived of them by too easy a satisfaction, a fearful emptiness and boredom comes over it, in other words, its being and existence become an intolerable burden for it. Hence its life swings like a pendulum to and fro between pain and boredom, and these two are in fact its ultimate con-

> stituents. This has been expressed very quaintly by saying that, after man had placed all the pains and torments in hell, there was nothing left for heaven but the boredom.
>
> (WWR I, 312)

In claiming that boredom inevitably follows upon the satisfaction of "too easy a satisfaction," Schopenhauer begs the crucial question. He really needs to argue that boredom soon sets in upon *any satisfaction*. What could "too easy a satisfaction" possibly mean in this context? Only a satisfaction that is obtained so easily that it causes boredom. Thus, the introduction of the formulation "too easy a satisfaction" reduces Schopenhauer's claim to an empty tautology. I believe that one should not, however, simply reject Schopenhauer's claim because of its unfortunate, self-trivializing formulation. Instead, one should address the claim that he actually needs to defend to make his case for the inevitability of human unhappiness, and which he probably also held to be true, namely, that all satisfaction of desire is rapidly followed by boredom with the object of the just satisfied desire.

Although we are certainly *sometimes* soon bored upon attaining a desire, and, moreover, bored by the very object we had so ardently desired, do we really *always* react to the attainment of a desire with an almost immediately occurring boredom? Do we even react that way even to all easily occurring satisfactions? Although we are sometimes disappointed in the depth and duration of our satisfaction upon achieving some desired goal, is this always the case? And even when we are disappointed, does this necessarily lead to boredom? Careful examination of our experience does not show that the satisfaction of desire always leads immediately (or even eventually) to boredom with the attained object of the desire.

Schopenhauer seems to suggest that the rapid recurrence of desire after what we normally take to be the satisfaction of desire, shows both that the satisfaction was insubstantial, and that it led to boredom, for boredom is the matrix out of which all new desires spring. This view rests in part upon his failure to distinguish sufficiently between the satisfaction of a particular desire and the satisfaction of all desire. And this confusion rests in turn upon his untenable view that in satisfying any desire we really hope to bring an end to all desire. In satisfying a particular desire we do not expect or hope to remove or even assuage all other sorts of desires. In eating I do not usually expect or want to satisfy my sexual desires. Nor, as I have already argued, do we even expect or want to prevent the recurrence of desires of the same sort.

Moreover, the onset of new desires soon after satisfaction of a particular desire does not itself show that boredom followed upon the satisfaction, for the simple reason that desires are not born only of boredom. Even when boredom after the satisfaction of a desire does occur, it does not show that one is bored with the object of desire that has been attained. To become bored eventually, after the satisfaction of a desire, does not show that we have become bored with that satisfaction but only that we can become bored despite that satisfaction.

Even the rapid recurrence of desires of the sort just satisfied does not necessarily signify that the putative satisfaction was not a real satisfaction or that boredom followed the satisfaction. Sometimes we want to repeat an experience or have another one of the same sort, just because it was so satisfying. *Satisfaction is not the same as satiation* – though Schopenhauer tends to confuse them.

5. The Negative Nature of Pleasure and Satisfaction

Schopenhauer's idea, that pleasure and satisfaction are only negative, i.e., only the absence of pain or want, also contributes to his bleak vision. Although we have direct experiences of desires, wants, lacks, needs, frustrations, suffering and pain, we do not, he maintains, have any direct experiences of satisfactions, pleasures, and contentment. What we refer to as the experience of satisfaction is really only the experience of the absence of any desire or lack; what we refer to as the experience of pleasure is only the experience of the absence of suffering or pain. If this is true, then there would not really be any positive experience of satisfaction, joy, or pleasure, in which they would constitute the content of our experience, but only the occasional relief from the experiences of want, suffering and pain, which *do constitute the contents of our experience*.

> For only pain and want can be felt positively; and therefore they proclaim themselves; well-being, on the contrary is merely negative. Therefore we do not become conscious of the three great blessings in life as such, namely health, youth, and freedom, as long as we possess them, but only after we lose them; for they too are negations.
>
> (WWR II, 575; see also WWR I, 319–23 and WWR II, 574)

Schopenhauer's examples are carefully chosen: we do tend to focus mentally upon our health, youth and freedom (and other goods) more when we lose them than when we possess them. We often take them for granted when we have them and do not think about them much or spend much time appreciating them in moments of reflection. However, it is quite another matter to argue, as Schopenhauer does, that we become aware of them only upon their loss and thus only in their absence, and that we do not experience or enjoy them at all when we have them. On the contrary, one does, sometimes at least, reflect with satisfaction upon the robust state of one's health or vigor, upon the possibilities still offered by one's (relative) youth, and upon the freedoms one enjoys.

Moreover, the *enjoyment* of one's health, youth or freedom is not limited to those experiences of them in which we positively reflect upon them. We enjoy them in a myriad of situations and actions in which they come into play without being reflected upon, but in which we are nevertheless aware of them, in actions that can be performed only because of them and in which they are manifested, experienced and enjoyed. We regularly experience and enjoy our health, youth and freedom, when we have them, without necessarily reflecting upon them. We can feel and enjoy them without necessarily thinking about them.

This view of the "negative" nature of pleasure and satisfaction relies in part upon Schopenhauer's confusing the satisfaction of a desire with its removal. If the satisfaction of a desire were *only* the removal of that desire and nothing else, the experience of the satisfaction would only be an experience of the absence of the desire. It would have no experiential content of its own. But, as I have previously argued, the satisfaction of a desire is not just the removal of that desire. Even if it entails the removal of a desire, a satisfaction consists of more than just that. It consists of more than the experience of the absence or removal of the desire it satisfies, and arguably has some sort of positive mental content.

Schopenhauer argues for the merely negative nature of all satisfaction in yet another way:

> All satisfaction, or what is commonly called happiness, is really and essentially always negative and never positive. It is not a gratification which comes to us originally and of itself, but it must always be the satisfaction of a wish. For desire, that is to say, want, is the precedent condition of every pleasure, but with the satisfaction, the desire and therefore the pleasure cease; and so the satisfaction or gratification can never be more than a deliverance from a pain, from a want.
>
> (WWR I, 319)

This argument contains a blatant *non sequitur*. Even if all satisfactions were by definition the satisfactions of desires, and thus some sort of want or desire were the precedent condition of every pleasure, it would still not follow that the satisfaction disappears with the desire or the pleasure with the deliverance from pain. If I desire to become rich, famous or loved, and achieve these goals, my satisfaction or pleasure does not necessarily cease with the removal of corresponding desires, that is, immediately upon the attainment of my goals. Desires may be required as precedent conditions for those pleasures that are to count as satisfactions, and those pleasures that do not seem to result from the fulfilment of some desire may not be *satisfactions* in the strict sense. But even if a desire is required as the precedent condition of a satisfaction in the strict sense, it is not therefore required as its sustaining condition.

To see this more clearly, it is important to distinguish between (1) the process of satisfying a desire and (2) the enjoyment of the satisfaction of the desire. To enjoy something, such as food or affection, as a satisfaction, in the *strict sense of satisfaction*, it must arguably be the satisfaction of a desire, but the experience or enjoyment or pleasure that results from the *process* of satisfying a desire does not cease as soon as the desire is fulfilled. The process of satisfying a desire should not be confused, as Schopenhauer seems to do, with the experience or enjoyment of this process and its results. While the process itself, by definition, ends promptly with the fulfillment of the desire, the experience and enjoyment of the process and its results can and often does continue on well past that point.

6. Happiness and Well-Being

Not all pleasures arise from the attainment of desired goals. Unforeseen, undreamt of, never desired, serendipitous delights also seem to play a role in human life. Schopenhauer seems to overlook this aspect of human felicity. He simply treats all occurrences of pleasure and happiness as if they were always satisfactions of desires, without directly arguing for this dubious position. It may be that to enjoy certain desirable states of affairs as satisfactions, they must be the attained objects of desire, but then it is not at all clear that all enjoyments are satisfactions in this sense, nor that all desirable conditions that we enjoy need to have actually been desired. Schopenhauer simply asserts that happiness is nothing but the satisfaction of desire: "All satisfaction, or what is commonly called happiness," is "really and essentially . . . always the satisfaction of a wish" (WWR I, 319).

Schopenhauer may have felt that he did not need to argue for this problematic identification, because it was supported sufficiently by his fundamental metaphysical thesis that we are in our true nature, will and nothing but will – a thesis that he believed he had already established. If we were indeed nothing but will, through and through, then it might well seem that all of our pleasures and joys would have to be the satisfaction of desires.

Schopenhauer claims that, in showing "the negative nature of all satisfaction," he has *ipso facto* also shown the negative nature of "all pleasure and happiness" (WWR II, 575). But the obvious examples of joys, pleasures, and feelings of general well-being which do not seem to be the satisfactions of specific desires, seems to block this simple identification. More importantly, it undermines his claim that, in showing the negative nature, or the intrinsically unsatisfactory character, of all purported satisfactions of desire, he has *ipso facto* shown the impossibility of any real happiness or pleasure. If we consider the actual evidence of our experience, independently of any assumption of Schopenhauer's will-based metaphysics, however, then the apparent presence of pleasures and delights in our lives that do not seem to be the satisfaction of desires offer *prima facie* evidence against this will-based metaphysics.

We have seen how Schopenhauer argues that life is inescapably fraught with pain, suffering, boredom and the lack of any real satisfaction. It might seem gratuitous to ask how these conclusions affect his views about the possibility of happiness and well-being in human life. How could he consider life as anything but unhappy and of negative value, given these views? Yet other thinkers have accepted the inevitability and prevalence of suffering and frustration in life and argued that life can still be happy, joyful, or valuable despite the suffering. Some, like Aristotle, have suggested a happiness or well-being (*eudaemonia*) that is not a simple function of just one's pleasures and pains, nor even just of one's positive and negative experiences. Others, like Nietzsche, have even argued that the value, joy, and satisfactions of life actually depend upon the difficulty and suffering we face in life, because it is only in overcoming difficulty and suffering that we find our deepest joy and satisfaction. It is Schopenhauer's identification of happiness or well-being with the satisfaction of desire, combined with his belief that desires cannot be really be satisfied, that entails that real happiness or well-being is unattainable.

7. Degrees of Unhappiness: The Possibility of Amelioration

Although Schopenhauer steadfastly denies the possibility of real happiness, he believes that one can at least reduce one's unhappiness by following certain life strategies. Even though, in his essay, *On the Vanity and Suffering of Life*, he cautions that "the comparatively happy are often only apparently so" (WWR II, 47), he believes that some of us do manage to be less miserable than others. Consequently, he devotes a considerable part of his philosophy to offering advice about how to lead a happier, really a less unhappy life, to develop views on what he calls "the wisdom of life" or "practical reason." He devotes large parts of Books 3 and 4 of *The World as Will and Representation* and a large part of *Parerga and Paralipomena* to this task (see WWR I, 169–213, 311–23, 378–98, WWR II, 148–59, PP I, 311–479). This aspect of Schopenhauer's philosophy

may at first seem inconsistent with his denial that one can ever really have a good life. It is, however, quite consistent to hold that "a genuine, lasting happiness is impossible" (WWR I, 320) and to offer advice about how to ameliorate its unhappiness, to live a happier, even the happiest possible, if not really happy, life. When, in the relevant parts of his works, he talks about how to achieve a better life, he is talking about achieving only comparative happiness, which amounts to becoming only relatively less unhappy, not about achieving true happiness, which he unwaveringly believes to be unattainable.

Since, for Schopenhauer, will and desire are the ultimate and ineluctable sources of our unhappiness, his strategies focus upon suspending or denying the will. The principle means to the amelioration of our condition are (1) the suspension of will that seems to occur whenever we adopt an aesthetic stance to whatever we are experiencing (discussed in Book 3 of WWR) and (2) the denial of will that occurs in various ascetic practices of self-denial (discussed in book 4). Since Schopenhauer equates genuine happiness with the real (and unattainable) satisfaction of our desires, he does not take the improvement of our lives that results from the suspension or denial of these desires to be happiness. Although he lauds the state in which we contemplate an object aesthetically, that is, with no involvement of the will, with no thought of acting on it, or using it to achieve some end, as "the painless state, prized by Epicurus as the highest good" (WWR I, 196), he also says that in this state "happiness and unhappiness have vanished" (WWR I, 197). In suspending the will, we suspend the dissatisfaction, pain and unhappiness associated with willing, but we also remove ourselves from whatever pleasure and happiness we do experience (no matter how limited) when we attain the object of our willing. Suspension of the will, whether achieved by adopting aesthetic or ascetic attitudes, frees us from the pain that prevails in the world of willing, but also from the evanescent happiness that is to be found only there.

But even if the painless state achieved by suspending the will does not count as "happiness," would it not furnish an adequate substitute for happiness, in that it offers at least a way to escape unhappiness? And does Schopenhauer's proposal of this possible amelioration of the human condition soften or even undermine his pessimism concerning the human condition? With respect to the suspension of will and the adoption of an aesthetic stance of pure contemplation, it does not because he holds that "it requires rare talents, it is granted only to a few and to those only as a fleeting dream" (WWR I, 314). The fleeting quality that Schopenhauer attributes to states of pure contemplation would not seem to hold, however, for long-term life strategies of self-abnegation and asceticism. Do they then provide a more promising path for the suspension or negation of the will?

8. The Paradox of the Suspension or Negation of the Will

The notion of any sort of suspension or negation of the will, whether it be through the adoption of an attitude of pragmatically disengaged, pure, aesthetic contemplation or ascetic life strategies of self-denial, turns out to be problematic when conjoined with Schopenhauer's metaphysical views. Schopenhauer argues that we are not beings who just perform acts of willing in addition to doing other sorts of things, or who

have wills in addition to other sorts of faculties, but creatures whose entire being is will and nothing but will. Given this view of our nature, it becomes incomprehensible how we could ever possibly suspend our will or have an experience in which our wills were not engaged. One can take a break from what one does, but not from what one *is*.

Schopenhauer acknowledges that some sort of contradiction is involved in the phenomena of "holiness and self-denial," but only an apparent and superficial one, which involves merely "a contradiction of the phenomenon with itself." Schopenhauer does not clearly describe this contradiction, but he is probably referring to our apparent ability to *contradict* ourselves, in resisting or suspending our own wants, inclinations, and volitions. This allows him to claim that despite the apparent contradiction "the elimination of the will in its most perfect phenomenon [the human being] is possible" (WWR I, 288). While our apparent ability to suspend, deny or oppose our own will in various ways does support his contention that the will can be denied or suspended, it at the same time undermines his metaphysical thesis that we are will and nothing but will. There seems to be not just an apparent contradiction within the phenomena of suspending or denying the will, but a deeper and perhaps irresolvable one between those human phenomena and Schopenhauer's will-based metaphysics of the being of humans.

9. The Inevitability of Unhappiness

Schopenhauer also offers suggestions for improving the quality of one's life even while still pursuing the objectives of the will. These have to do with maintaining the optimal rhythm or tempo of the cycle of desire to satisfaction and back to fresh desire. He holds that: "For desire and satisfaction to follow each other at not too short and not too long intervals, reduces the suffering occasioned by both to the smallest amount, and constitutes the happiest life" (WWR 1, 314). It is important to remember that, for Schopenhauer, these strategies for the life in which we continue to pursue our desires, and which produce "what is called happiness," or "the happiest life," do not produce true happiness, but only reduce the unhappiness endemic to the life of desire.

Schopenhauer eventually argues that it is the very inevitability of our unhappiness that furnishes us with consolation. If one does not accept the inevitability of one's unhappiness, one experiences it as a condition that might have been avoided by more prudent behavior, and one is tormented by one's own failure to have behaved appropriately. But if one understands that one's unhappiness is inevitable, one is at least no longer tormented by the thought that one might have done something to avoid it (see WWR I, 315–19).

To the extent that Schopenhauer offers us various strategies for ameliorating our condition, even if they do not produce real happiness, we are in a position to make our lives, which remain necessarily unhappy, at least better to some extent. With respect to any aspect of our lives for which there is the possibility of some amelioration, there is no longer the consolation of the inevitability of all of our woes. Hope and possibility provide their own sort of consolation, but it differs from and undermines the sort of consolation offered by Schopenhauer.

See also 8 Schopenhauer on Sex, Love and Emotions; 14 Schopenhauer on Tragedy and the Sublime; 21 Schopenhauer and Freud; 22 Schopenhauer's Impact on European Literature; 23 Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner.

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Part V

Schopenhauer's Context and Legacy

21

Schopenhauer and Freud

STEPHAN ATZERT

This chapter discusses Schopenhauer's influence on Freud and shows that it resulted in a very distinct semantic and linguistic imprint in Freud's writings. Initially, the most relevant secondary works are presented and the intellectual atmosphere of Freud's formative years is sketched, in order to determine the historical role of Schopenhauer's philosophy for Freud and his peers and mentors. This first part also provides an appreciation of Schopenhauer's approach to mental illness. Then acknowledged and unacknowledged references to Schopenhauer in Freud's writings will be discussed in three case studies.

Aloys Becker (1971) provides a summarily overview of Schopenhauer's unacknowledged influences on Freud and suggests a number of relevant inquiries. Thus Becker establishes that Freud read Schopenhauer as early as 1900, in order to quote him in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). While Freud may not have studied Schopenhauer systematically at that time, Becker suggests that the use of quotations demonstrates a careful examination and interpretation of Schopenhauer's thoughts. Marcel Zentner's *Die Flucht ins Vergessen* (1995) is the only monograph to date which is exclusively concerned with Schopenhauer's psychological insights. Apart from discussing the extent to which these pre-empt Freud's discoveries, Zentner sheds light on Schopenhauer's early medical studies in Berlin around 1813, i.e., before writing *The World as Will and Representation.* As recommended in his study guide, Schopenhauer visited the Charité, the Berlin asylum, to observe the patients. *Die Flucht ins Vergessen* contains transcripts of two texts by inmates of the Berlin asylum, preserved as part of Schopenhauer's estate (Zentner 1995, 193–208). These texts, alongside anecdotal evidence, suggest that Schopenhauer's sympathetic approach was appreciated by the patients, with whom he developed friendly relationships. One Traugott Schultze dedicated a long poem on compassion to Schopenhauer:

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> To the noble one, who appears fair
> to him who cries in the cell
> the suffering friend of human beings.
>
> (Zentner 1995, 23)

A longer prose text, written by the inmate Ernst Hoeffner, is particularly worthy of note, because it suggests that mental distress arises from trauma or repression:

> There is nothing more dangerous than a human who is suddenly separated from all that wherein he sought and found his life, in accordance with his capacities. . . . Of course he cannot harm anyone in the way the world comprehends it, but incomprehensibly he is harmful and very dangerous: in accordance with his nature he only seeks to deceive, to cheat, to lie, to beguile, to obscure, to blind . . . – but things do not come to pass as he wishes, the good courage is lost and the disturbed person develops.
>
> (Zentner 1995, 28)

Zentner (1995, 28ff.) glosses Hoeffner's text in detail and concludes that Schopenhauer's close encounter with Schultze and Hoeffner – and with human suffering in the asylum in general – was instrumental in the development of his ethics of compassion. Certainly these two texts testify to Schopenhauer's compassionate personal engagement with their authors. They also show that Schopenhauer gathered empirical data from a series of meetings and conversations with patients, developing a descriptive approach to mental illness, long before Freud, and in a medical environment dominated by physiological theories of mental illness. Moreover, Zentner finds a distinct resemblance between the ethical and ascetic ideas expressed in the writings of the two inmates from 1813, which predate Schopenhauer's philosophy as expressed in *The World as Will and Representation*, written between 1814 and 1818.

Peter Wegner's unpublished dissertation "Das Unbewusste in Schopenhauers Metaphysik und Freuds Psychoanalyse" (1991) provides a comprehensive and insightful analysis of primary texts. A table listing 21 similarities in the description of will and Id (Wegner 1991, 123ff.) predates Zentner's separate set of 27 corresponding expressions, though Zentner also supplies a second table which compares descriptions of the intellect (Schopenhauer) and the Ego (Freud). In all three tables the similarities, evident even in the literary expression, show clearly how decisive Schopenhauer was for Freud's meta-psychological theory. Thus, for example, Schopenhauer describes the will as the "core of our being," the "original," "primary" and "very first," which appears "complete in infants." Freud, in writing about the Id, describes it in very similar terms, as the "core of our being," as "primary process," as "the oldest faculty of the psychic apparatus" and states that "originally everything is Id" (Zentner 1995, 87). Wegner and Zentner conclude that the similarity in the expression is due to Freud's close study and redrafting of Schopenhauer's systematization of the unconscious.

While Zentner stresses the significance of Schopenhauer's visits to the Charité for the development of his philosophy, Wegner emphasizes Schopenhauer's active interest in hypnotism as a significant parallel to Freud, who was introduced to hypnotism by Jean-Martin Charcot in 1885 during three months of a post-doctoral internship at the Salpêtrière in Paris. Freud's expertise with hypnotism over the next decade (*Studies on*

Hysteria, 1895) became a major stepping stone for his development of psychoanalysis, a term coined by Freud in 1896. Sixty-five years before Freud studied hypnosis with Charcot, in 1820, Schopenhauer was introduced to the practice of magnetism by Christian Wolfart, who had been professor for healing magnetism in Berlin since 1817. Wegner holds that Schopenhauer's early encounter with hypnotism was the main reason why he started to collect information about the unconscious mind. Schopenhauer's sustained interest in hypnotism is evident from a chapter devoted to the topic in *On the Will in Nature* (1836), and Wegner emphasizes that Schopenhauer's explanation of hypnotic phenomena would nowadays be thought of as the result of a depth-psychological approach (Wegner 1991, 139).

Finally, Günter Gödde's *Traditionslinien des Unbewussten* (1999) focuses on the development of Freud's ideas into psychoanalytic theory and portrays in detail the intellectual and professional influences to which Freud was exposed. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are discussed as the main influences, but Gödde – in contrast to Becker, Wegner and Zentner – accords Freud significant merit for reframing and redefining received concepts. According to Gödde, Freud's early interest in philosophical questions is documented in the letters to his friend Eduard Silberstein and in a letter written to Wilhelm Fließ in 1896, in which he states that as a young man he yearned for nothing but philosophical insight (Gödde 1999, 84). When Freud began his studies at the University of Vienna, the influence of Schopenhauer was exercised largely through his peers (Victor Adler, Siegfried Lipiner) and mentors (Johannes Volkelt, Theodor Meynert). Zentner notes that Schopenhauer was not only read as a philosopher, but also for his psychological and physiological observations. Freud's fellow medical student Victor Adler, for example, discovered Schopenhauer as a complement to the study of medicine, not in opposition to it (Zentner 1995, 183). Otto Weininger adopted Schopenhauer's views on inherent bisexuality in *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903), a study which influenced Wilhelm Fließ as well as Freud (Zentner 1995, 231). Schopenhauer's discovery that madness can result from traumatic psychological repression (Zentner 1995, 47) would have been of interest to such readers, as would Schopenhauer's dual model of self (i.e., will and intellect in Schopenhauer's terminology), which was later replicated in Freud's terminology as Id and Ego.

In 1873, Freud joined the "Leseverein der deutschen Studenten Wiens." In this "Reading Club of the German Students of Vienna" philosophical topics were regularly discussed, particularly with reference to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and von Hartmann. While Freud belonged to the anti-metaphysical, empirical faction, there were others who were known to be Schopenhauerians, among them Theodor Meynert, professor of psychiatry (Gödde 1999, 102).

It needs to be taken into account that Schopenhauer's ideas had already been mediated by a generation of interpreters and critics, such as von Hartmann and Nietzsche. In *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869), a philosophical best-seller in its time, Eduard von Hartmann had adapted Schopenhauer's philosophy to include a teleology according to which all activities of all organisms are determined by the psychic activity of a metaphysical unconscious, which purposefully goads the individuals to a greater good. Even though Schopenhauer hypothesizes on this point in an essay called "Transcendent Speculation on the Apparent Deliberateness in the Fate of the Individual" (1851) – this essay will be discussed with reference to Freud in detail below, it is by no means

central to Schopenhauer's philosophy. Apart from such changes of emphasis, which occur in any process of interpretation and differentiation, variance in terminology is employed to mark difference. As Gödde shows, Nietzsche changed some of his terminology – he stopped using "unconscious" and adopted "instinct" by the time of publishing *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) – in order to avoid the term used by Hartmann: "While in all productive humans the instinct is the creative and affirmative force, consciousness behaves critically and reproachingly" (Gödde 2002, 164). Despite variations in terminology and emphasis, the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy conditioned the process of interpretation and differentiation in Freud's formative intellectual environment. This would in due time encourage Freud to participate in the process of appropriating and reframing Schopenhauer's ideas.

While studying in Vienna, however, Freud was at least equally under the influence of empiricist and materialist thought. He read Ludwig Feuerbach, who gave material conditions the position of primacy over ideas. While Meynert found merit in Schopenhauer's ideas, Ernst Brücke, professor of physiology, held that only physical energies moved life along, not higher powers or purposes. At the time Freud identified strongly with these materialist and empiricist attitudes, particularly with Feuerbach's notion that philosophy signified a backward, outdated belief in metaphysical concepts. This exposure to positivist thinking explains Freud's temporary reservations about philosophy, but it would be incorrect to overstate his alliance with hard science over philosophy in general – and over Schopenhauer's in particular. When the psychoanalytic movement became a force in its own right, Freud was free to define its criteria, which differed from those of positivist science and idealist metaphysics. Freud wrote *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926) in response to Theodor Reik's exclusion from practicing psychoanalysis on the grounds that he was not a medical doctor. Freud was convinced that one did not need to be a doctor or a psychiatrist to be a psychoanalyst, and many of the best analysts – such as Hans Sachs, Oskar Pfister, Siegfried Bernfeld and Lou Andreas-Salome – were not medical professionals, but well-educated, mature individuals (Meyhöfer 2006, 665–68). Therefore Freud's concern with acceptance by medical science was superseded by his definition of the professional requirements for psychoanalytic practice, which emphasized the capacity of non-medically trained individuals to be competent psychoanalysts.

Of course Freud's attitudes would have changed over the course of his life, but subordination under a narrowly defined scientific code was of little concern for him. The fact that Schopenhauer is not mentioned as often as would be fitting is better explained by Freud's aspirations to originality, relevant if we take into account that Schopenhauer is mentioned nine times in Freud's collected works and 17 times in the letters, contrasted by 150 claims to originality and first discovery by Freud (Becker 1971, 116f.). While Freud undeniably made many original contributions, he masked his intellectual debt to Schopenhauer, because he was determined to appear as the founding father of psychoanalytic theory and meta-psychological discourse, i.e., of an adequate, descriptive model of the human mind and of an interpretative framework for human concerns. Freud's desire to be accepted by scientists – often cited as a motivating factor – is of secondary importance in this respect. While Freud's description of the human experience would by necessity show points of similarity to Schopenhauer's, the actual similarities extend beyond those inherent in related themes.

The next section examines Freud's specific appropriation of Schopenhauer's concepts through a close analysis of selected writings. It is divided into three case studies, the first of which is based on Wegner's analysis of Freud's *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), a text which shows close parallels to Schopenhauer's "On the Theory of the Ludicrous," chapter 8 of the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation* (1844). The second case study is based on the most poignant findings in Atzert's (2005) analysis of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), which is set in relation to Schopenhauer's essay "Transcendent Speculation on the Apparent Deliberateness in the Fate of the Individual," chapter 4 of his *Parerga and Paralipomena* (1851). The third case study presents selected comparisons from Atzert's (2007) examination of Freud's text about religion, *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), which bears a number of similarities to Schopenhauer's treatise "A Dialogue," the first part of "On Religion," chapter 15 of the second part of *Parerga and Paralipomena.* This survey of three sets of texts allows us to specify Freud's appropriation of Schopenhauer's ideas over two decades. In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), Freud embraces the discrepancy between intellect and will, which Schopenhauer had used as the basis of his theory of the ludicrous. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), the appropriation lies in the reproduction of the structure of an argument which relates pleasure and displeasure to life and death. In *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), Freud adopts both the dialogic structure and most of the arguments for and against religion that can be found in Schopenhauer's text.

1. Case Study I: *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905)

Both Schopenhauer and Freud present the ludicrous as the result of the discrepancy between the abstract concept and the experience or fact – and explain why the perceived gap is experienced as being funny. Peter Wegner (1991) shows how Freud's primary and secondary processes – a model he developed in chapter 7 of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) – correspond to the will and the intellect in Schopenhauer's philosophy. Freud's primary process is the original, primary way in which an individual operates psychologically: it thinks in images, it is concerned with immediate gratification and satisfaction, and it is the process of the Id. The secondary process represents the ego, abstract thinking and the possibility of delayed gratification. These two modes of engaging with the world occur in parallel and the gulf between them becomes apparent in jokes:

> It is a necessary condition for generating the comic that we should be obliged, *simultaneously or in rapid succession*, to apply to one and the same act of ideation two different ideational methods, between which the 'comparison' is then made and the comic difference emerges . . . In the case of jokes, the difference between two simultaneous methods of viewing things, which operate with a different expenditure, applies to the process in the person who hears the joke. One of these views, following the hints contained in the joke, passes along the path of thought through the unconscious; the other stays on the surface and views the joke like any other wording that has emerged from the preconscious and become conscious.
>
> (Freud 1960, 234)

Both Schopenhauer and Freud differentiate between several forms of the ludicrous, though Freud introduces more categories and gives many more examples of jokes. Schopenhauer's treatise on the topic is short by comparison, but the main elements of Freud's theory are present, prominently that of the ludicrous as being dependent on the relation between perception and representation: "when discovering such an incongruity, from the real, i.e., the perceptive, to the concept, or conversely from the concept to the real, the ludicrous that thus results is either a witticism or an absurdity, and in the higher degree, especially in the practical sphere, a folly" (WWR II, 92). As Wegner points out (1991, 64ff.), the parallels between Schopenhauer and Freud are not limited to the general conceptual framework. In writing about the mechanisms by which jokes relate to the primary process, Freud identifies "condensation" (1960, 18) and "displacement" (1960, 51). Condensation means that several ideas are represented by a single term or image, with a resulting mismatch. Displacement refers to substituting one idea by another through association, i.e., by a similar-sounding word (Wegner 1991, 65f). As Wegner demonstrates, Schopenhauer identifies both mechanisms, he refers to condensation as "subsumption": "According to my explanation, put forward in volume one, the origin of the ludicrous is always the paradoxical, and thus unexpected, subsumption of an object under a concept that is in other respects heterogeneous to it" (WWR II, 91). Displacement is also referred to by Schopenhauer: "The *intentionally* ludicrous is the *joke.* This is the effort to bring about a discrepancy between another's concepts and reality by displacing one of the two; whereas its opposite, *seriousness*, consists in the exact suitability of the two to each other which is at any rate striven after" (WWR II, 99).

The notion of a discrepancy between concept and reality, however, does not yet explain why jokes are funny. Wegner summarizes Freud's position by stating that the same facts are at once expressed in the language of the unconscious, the primary process, and in the language of normal rational thought, the secondary process. However, it is the primary process, different from and incongruent with abstract thinking, which gives rise to the pleasurable feeling, because the comparison of the two processes happens unconsciously. Here Wegner (1991, 64) comments that Schopenhauer identified this mechanism before Freud, when he wrote of the "immediate satisfaction" of "the original kind of knowledge":

> As a rule, laughing is a pleasant state; accordingly, the apprehension of the incongruity between what is conceived and what is perceived, i.e., reality, gives us pleasure . . . The reason for this is the following. . . . the perceived is always undoubtedly in the right, for it is in no way subject to error, and needs no confirmation from outside, but is its own advocate. . . . This triumph of knowledge of perception over thought gives us pleasure. For perception is the original kind of knowledge, inseparable from animal nature, in which everything that gives immediate satisfaction to the will presents itself.
>
> (WWR II, 98)

With the distinction between "what is conceived and what is perceived" Schopenhauer distinguishes between primary and secondary processes in relation to the function of jokes and, equally important, points out the pleasurable effect of this rupture, the delight we experience "to see this strict, untiring, and most troublesome governess, our faculty of reason, for once convicted of inadequacy" (WWR II, 98).

A pattern of appropriation similar to the one described here will also apply in the third case study, where Freud closely models his essay – at least in parts – on a text by Schopenhauer for structure and content. In the second case study, discussed in the next section, we find a more sophisticated, indirect usage of Schopenhauer's ideas.

2. Case Study II: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920)

In this meta-psychological text, Freud begins by examining an unresolved contradiction in psychoanalytic theory: the fact that an underlying hedonistic motivation – this assumption about human motivation was shared by psychologists before Freud and entered psychoanalytic theory as the pleasure principle – cannot explain why many aspects in the psychological life of the individual run counter to it. These forces are summarized by the term "death drives." In his psychological practice, Freud had noted two phenomena: first, that the pleasure principle seeks to reduce tension, to return to a state of equilibrium; second, that this tendency could also be observed when displeasure was involved, for example in the repeated nightmares and compulsive memories of traumatized soldiers: "The new and remarkable fact, however, that we have now to describe is that the repetition-compulsion also revives experiences of the past that contain no potentiality of pleasure, and which could at no time have been satisfactions, even of impulses since repressed" (Freud 1922, 20). Freud concluded that repetition itself, even though it may be of unpleasant feelings, is a pattern in the psyche older than the pleasure principle, with which it shares the tendency to return to an equilibrium:

> Our recognition that the ruling tendency of psychic life, perhaps of nerve life altogether, is the struggle for reduction, keeping at constant level, or removal of the inner stimulus tension . . . – a struggle which comes to expression in the pleasure principle – is indeed one of our strongest motives for believing in the existence of death-instincts.
>
> (Freud 1922, 71)

This movement towards equilibrium or *stasis* has to be the expression of an older, primary drive to which the pleasure principle is subordinate, even though this pattern is still at play in the dynamic, expansive pleasure principle, when it seeks gratification in order to reduce stimulus tension. Freud then relates this meta-psychological systematization to the dynamic tension that exists between organic and inorganic matter: the return to an inorganic, lifeless *stasis* is part of the necessary cycle of life and death, of which can be said: "If we may assume as an experience admitting of no exception that everything living dies from causes within itself, and returns to the inorganic, we can only say, '*The goal of all life is death*', and, casting back, '*The inanimate was there before the animate.*'" (Freud 1922, 47). Freud introduces the term death drives for this inner dynamic, and he does so with a reference to Schopenhauer: "thus, without realizing it, we sailed into the harbour of Schopenhauer's philosophy, for whom death is the 'result' and thus the purpose of life and the sexual urge the embodiment of the will to live" (Freud 1922, 63). The reference is to Schopenhauer's "Transcendent Speculation on the Apparent Deliberateness in the Fate of the Individual," chapter 4 of *Parerga and*

Paralipomena (1851). In a letter to Lou Andreas-Salome from 1919, Freud stated that he was reading Schopenhauer for the first time (Freud 1919, 98).

Schopenhauer's treatise, however, places a different emphasis on death. Schopenhauer begins by noting that life events often appear significant or purposeful in hindsight:

> Yet we think that at every moment we are masters of our actions; but if we look back on the course of our lives and in particular bear in mind our unfortunate steps together with their consequences, we often do not understand how we could do this or omit to do that, so that it looks as if a strange power has guided our steps.
>
> (PP I, 208)

This constitutes the "apparent deliberateness in the fate of the individual." Apparently fateful unconscious choices also feature in Freud's essay, when he writes:

> more striking are those cases, where the person seems to be experiencing something passively, without exerting any influence of his own, and yet always meets with the same fate over and over again. . . . In the light of observations as these, drawn from behaviour during transference and from the fate of human beings, we may venture to make the assumption that there really exists in psychic life a repetition-compulsion, which goes beyond the pleasure-principle.
>
> (Freud 1922, 23)

Thus Freud mentions the central topic of Schopenhauer's essay as an apparently fateful experience – i.e., one relying on external causes – in non-neurotic individuals.

Schopenhauer illustrates the psychological function of the apparent guidance through fate by an analogy with dreams. In dreams, individuals experience themselves as agents, but also encounter support and obstacles. Even though these arise from within, they are experienced as external influences:

> Thus, even in the dream, circumstances by pure chance coincide and there become the motives of our actions, circumstances that are external to and independent of us and indeed often abhorrent. But yet there is between them a mysterious and appropriate connection since a hidden power that is obeyed by all the incidents in the dream controls and arranges even these circumstances and indeed solely with reference to us. But the strangest thing of all is that this power can ultimately be none other than our own will, yet from a point of view that does not enter our dreaming consciousness.
>
> (PP I, 216)

As Schopenhauer explains, this observation about dreams holds true in the waking state as well. The dream is staged by the will, "yet from a region that lies far beyond the representing consciousness in the dream and thus appears therein as inexorable fate" (PP I, 217). For the waking state, Schopenhauer concedes the possibility – we must bear in mind that this is a speculative essay, as the title suggests, and accordingly the entire passage is in the subjunctive –

> that fate that controls the actual course of our lives ultimately comes in some way from the *will.* This is our own and yet here, where it appears as fate, it operates from a region

> that lies far beyond our representing individual consciousness; whereas this furnishes the motives that guide our empirically knowable individual will.
>
> (PP I, 219)

In both states the stroke of fate, engineered by the supra-individual will, may be at odds with individual intentions, and also generate a subjective impression that the resulting conditions are set up only in relation to the individual. This impression results inevitably from the varied individual circumstances, but still it is overshadowed by a goal beyond individual concerns:

> Only in a very general way can it be stated what is really meant ultimately by the whole of this mysterious guidance of the individual's course of life which we have been considering. If we stop at individual cases, it often appears that such guidance has in view only our transient welfare for the time being. Yet this cannot be its ultimate aim, in view of the insignificant, imperfect, futile, and fleeting nature of that welfare. And so we have to look for this ultimate aim in our eternal existence that goes beyond the life of the individual.
>
> (PP I, 222)

For Schopenhauer, the goal of "our eternal existence that goes beyond the life of the individual" is not death, as Freud suggests, but inner renunciation called for by the will, which is aware of death. This is in keeping with Schopenhauer's general philosophy, which holds that the will's turning away from life constitutes its ultimate aim, a goal not only for yogis and mystics, but really for every human being. The repeated encounter with suffering is the precondition by which this learning process is set in motion: "Again, as happiness and pleasure militate against that aim [of renunciation], we see, in keeping therewith, misery and suffering inevitably interwoven in the course of every life, although in very unequal measure" (PP I, 223). This implies the repetition of unpleasant experiences as well as the interchange of pleasure and pain, which – for Schopenhauer – promotes detachment from the impermanent. For Freud, the repeated experience of unpleasant situations indicates the primacy of the death drives. The last paragraph of Schopenhauer's essay begins with the sentence quoted by Freud: "Thus that invisible guidance, that shows itself only in a doubtful form, accompanies us to death, to that real result, and, to this extent, the purpose of life" (PP I, 223). Freud's statement, that life will inevitably return to death, had been presented by Schopenhauer with a different meaning: death is the most important point of reference for life. The structural similarity of the arguments lies not only in the role of death for life, but also in the compulsion inherent in the death drive. This correlates with the "hidden power," which the individual experiences passively in preparation for death. In short, one could say that Freud's argument replicates Schopenhauer's, but without the metaphysics.

In the dream analogy, Schopenhauer explains that the changing fortunes of life have to be felt as pleasure and pain, they are not the subject of abstract thought or inference. Indeed, Schopenhauer provides an explanation for pleasant and painful sensations. In view of this, Freud's introductory remarks, which outline the scope of his essay, seem exaggerated, because Freud states that there exists no philosophical or psychological theory which could explain the meaning of pleasurable or unpleasant sensations: "On the other hand, we should willingly acknowledge our indebtedness to any philosophical or psychological theory that could tell us the meaning of these feelings of pleasure and

'pain' which affect us so powerfully. Unfortunately no theory of any value is forthcoming" (Freud 1922, 2). As outlined above, Freud's explanation contains remarkable similarities to Schopenhauer's, except that Schopenhauer does not take "death to be the purpose of life" – here Freud corroborates his own reading, his interpretation of Schopenhauer – but holds that death will inform a purposeful life.

Finally, Freud's hypothesis that Eros is derived from the death drive can also be found in Schopenhauer's writings. Freud emphasizes that "we took as our starting point a sharp distinction between the ego-instincts (=death instincts) and the sexual instincts (=life instincts)" (Freud 1922, 67), wherein "the Libido of our sexual instincts would coincide with the Eros of poets and philosophers, which holds together all things living" (Freud 1922, 64). This formulation contains no deviation from Schopenhauer, who defines Eros in *The World as Will and Representation* as follows: "Because the inner being of nature, the will to life, expresses itself most strongly in the sexual impulse, the ancient poets and philosophers – Hesiod and Parmenides – said very significantly that *Eros* is the first, that which creates, the principle from which all things emerge" (WWR I, 330).

It needs to be emphasized that Schopenhauer also anticipated Freud's intertwined duality of Eros and death drive discussed above (Freud 1922, 47), namely that – in Freud's terms – the dynamic pleasure principle emerges from the static death drives and seeks to return to them. Schopenhauer calls the death drive by its Latin name Orcus, which represents the Roman god of the underworld. Thanatos – a term adopted by Freud's students for the death drive – is the Greek god of death. The following passage features in a prominent position, in the last paragraph of Schopenhauer's "On the Wisdom of Life," the last chapter of the first part of *Parerga und Paralipomena*, the volume which also contains the "Transcendent Speculation on the Apparent Deliberateness in the Fate of the Individual":

> Here I cannot take into account *Neptune* (unfortunately so dubbed through thoughtlessness) because I may not call it by its true name which is *Eros.* Otherwise I would show how beginning and end are connected together, namely how Eros is secretly related to death. By virtue of this relation, Orcus . . . is not only the taker but also the giver, and death the great reservoir of life. Therefore everything comes from Orcus and everything that now has life has already been there.
>
> (PP I, 497)

Freud's duality of Eros and death drives and Schopenhauer's affirmation of Orcus as the older and greater power bear distinct similarities. Both writers agree that the duality only pertains to the appearance of the phenomena, because – in Freud's terms – the death drive is the precondition for the pleasure principle, not its opposition. Hence Schopenhauer's formulation of "death the great reservoir of life" prefigures Freud's statement: "The pleasure-principle seems directly to subserve the death-instincts" (Freud 1920, 83).

3. Case Study III: *The Future of an Illusion* (1927)

While Freud's appropriation of structure and content in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* demonstrates considerable conceptual adaptation, *The Future of an Illusion* is an example

of a more obvious reliance on his predecessor. Freud, in his text about religion, *The Future of an Illusion,* appears to have used – to a considerable extent – Schopenhauer's treatise "A Dialogue" as a blueprint. "A Dialogue" forms the first part of "On Religion," chapter 15 of the second volume of *Parerga and Paralipomena*. Much as in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* discussed above, Freud puts forward his meta-psychological theories of culture in the overall structure of *Future of an Illusion,* yet we find that sections VI to X rely in large part on Schopenhauer's "A Dialogue" for both structure and content. This is referred to in a somewhat obscure disclaimer:

> Besides, I have said nothing which other and better men have not said before me in a much more complete, forcible and impressive manner. Their names are well known, and I shall not cite them, for I should not like to give an impression that I am seeking to rank myself as one of them. All I have done – and this is the only thing that is new in my exposition – is to add some psychological foundation to the criticism of my great predecessors.
>
> (Freud 1961, 45)

One unmentioned great predecessor is present in a little over half of Freud's 55-page essay, where the positions of Schopenhauer's dialogue partners are replicated. Schopenhauer's text consists entirely of a dialogue between Philalethes and Demopheles, whereas in Freud's text the opponent, who favors and defends the cause of religion, recedes at times to make way for Freud's commentary. As the comparison below shows, the positions taken by Freud and Philalethes are quite similar, as are those of Demopheles and Freud's imaginary dialogue partner.

The question whether religion is beneficial or detrimental to human culture forms the contentious issue around which both dialogues revolve. Demopheles' weightiest argument is that Philalethes "should look at religion more from the practical side than from the theoretical. . . . Possibly the metaphysical element in all religions is false; but in all, the moral element is true" (PP II, 340). Without hesitation Philalethes agrees to Demopheles' suggestion to weigh the "practical side," the moral effectiveness of religious precepts, and contradicts him with a damning enumeration of the misdeeds committed in the name of Christianity:

> a time when the Church had shackled the minds, and force and violence the bodies, of men so that knights and priests could lay the entire burden of life on the third estate, their common beast of burden. There you find the right of might, feudalism and fanaticism in close alliance, and in their train shocking ignorance and mental obscurity, a corresponding intolerance, dissension in matters of faith, religious wars, crusades, persecution of heretics and inquisitions.
>
> (PP II, 349)

Freud adopts an equally critical attitude, when he writes that human beings did not lead happier or more moral lives in times of greater religious domination. He questions whether "we are not overrating its necessity for mankind, and whether we do wisely in basing our cultural demands upon it" (Freud 1961, 48), whereas Schopenhauer's Philalethes uses a more forceful rhetorical device:

> Just imagine if all the criminal laws were suddenly declared by public proclamation to be abolished; I do not think that either you or I would have the courage to go home alone,

> even only from here, under the protection of religious motives. On the other hand, if, in the same manner, all religions were declared to be untrue, we should go on living as before under the protection of the laws alone, without any special increase in our fears or our precautionary measures.
>
> (PP II, 354)

The inquiry into the perceived benefit of religion to society soon turns into an appraisal of the means by which religion operates. Since the opponents in both texts agree that religion is allegorical, they only debate whether it is possible to justify the popular religious beliefs, which take allegories as literal truths. Demopheles backs the view that religion must be represented allegorically and mythically, because the common people cannot grasp the sublime truth in its pure form, which is accessible only to philosophers and the educated elite: "the profound meaning and lofty aim of life can be revealed and presented only *symbolically* because men are incapable of grasping these in their proper signification. Philosophy, on the other hand, should be . . . for the few and the elect" (PP II, 333).

Freud's opponent claims that religious doctrine

> allows a refinement and sublimation of ideas, which make it possible for it to be divested of most of the traces which it bears of primitive and infantile thinking. What then remains is a body of ideas which science no longer contradicts and is unable to disprove. These modifications of religious doctrine . . . make it possible to avoid the cleft between the uneducated masses and the philosophic thinker, and to preserve the common bond between them which is so important for the safeguarding of civilization.
>
> (Freud 1961, 67)

Like Demopheles, Freud's opponent refers to social cohesiveness as the main function of religion in human culture. In Schopenhauer's "A Dialogue," Philalethes retorts with the famous characterization of religion as "truth wearing the garment of falsehood":

> I understand; the whole thing amounts to truth appearing in the guise of falsehood; but in doing so it enters into an alliance that is injurious to it. . . . If this is the case, I am afraid that the damage done by falsehood will be greater than any advantage ever produced by the truth.
>
> (PP II, 333)

In a like manner, Freud refers to the obfuscation of truth and to the frustration which results from the disillusionment of the believers:

> The truths contained in religious doctrines are after all so distorted and systematically disguised that the mass of humanity cannot recognize them as truth. The case is similar to what happens when we tell a child that new-born babies are brought by the stork. Here, too, we are telling the truth in symbolic clothing, for we know what the large bird signifies. But the child does not know it.
>
> (Freud 1961, 57)

Disillusionment is one of the dangers Schopenhauer pointed out as a cost of maintaining falsehood. In addition, Freud mentions the refractoriness that arises from the loss

of trust and that destabilizes society. The reference to childhood is intertextually significant, insofar as both authors characterize childhood as a phase of blind acceptance, and therefore of susceptibility to religious indoctrination. Freud bemoans the "depressing contrast between the radiant intelligence of a healthy child and the feeble intellectual powers of the average adult" and insinuates that religious indoctrination is guilty of this atrophy of natural capabilities:

> Is it not true that the two main points in the programme for the education of children today are retardation of sexual development and premature religious influence? Thus by the time the child's intellect awakens, the doctrines of religion have already become unassailable. . . . So long as a person's early years are influenced not only by a sexual inhibition of thought but also by a religious inhibition and by a loyal inhibition derived from this, we cannot really tell what in fact he is.
>
> (Freud 1961, 60)

A thought process that has been deformed in this manner is unsuitable for genuine scholarly work, or, in Schopenhauer's words, for "sincere investigation of the truth":

> What can be more opposed to genuine philosophical effort, to the sincere investigation of the truth, to this noblest calling of the noblest men, than this conventional metaphysics which is invested with a monopoly by the State? Its precepts and dogmas are inculcated so earnestly, deeply, and firmly, at the earliest age into every mind that, unless that mind is miraculously elastic, they remain indelibly impressed. In this way, its faculty of reason is once for all confused and deranged, in other words, its capacity for original thought and unbiased judgement, weak enough as it is, is for ever paralysed and ruined as regards everything connected therewith.
>
> (PP II, 326)

As well as reflecting on religion in society and rejecting religious indoctrination of children, both essays also occupy common ground in respect to the future of religious beliefs. Philalethes holds that scientific progress and the dissemination of its insights inevitably lead to the demise of religion:

> For, as you know, religions are like glow-worms in that they need darkness in order to shine. A certain degree of general ignorance is the condition of all religions, is the only element in which they can live. On the other hand, as soon as astronomy, natural science, geology, history, knowledge of countries and peoples, spread their light everywhere and finally even philosophy is allowed to have a word, every faith founded on miracles and revelation is bound to disappear, whereupon philosophy takes its place.
>
> (PP II, 345)

Naturally, the mention of philosophy in the final clause is a reference to Schopenhauer's philosophy, which laid a sweeping claim to both empirical and epistemological validity. Freud gives science, not philosophy, the pride of place, but otherwise he also writes that the unreliability of religious promises is becoming an increasingly accepted fact, accepted because scientific thought is gaining influence in the upper strata of society. Consequently, the fate of religion is irrevocable:

> Criticism has whittled away the evidential value of religious documents, natural science has shown up the errors in them, and comparative research has been struck by the fatal resemblance between the religious ideas which we revere and the mental products of primitive people and times.
>
> The scientific spirit brings about a particular attitude towards worldly matters; before religious matters it pauses for a little, hesitates, and finally there too crosses the threshold. In this process there is no stopping; the greater the number of men to whom the treasures of knowledge become accessible, the more widespread is the falling away from religious belief – at first only from its obsolete and objectionable trappings, but later from its fundamental postulates as well.
>
> (Freud 1927, 49)

Again, both writers predict a development towards greater scientific understanding at the expense of religious beliefs. While Schopenhauer claims that his philosophy provides the unifying intellectual model of the human experience, Freud's sober defense of science would implicitly extend to psychoanalysis.

The parallels between the two texts are too numerous to be compared in their entirety here. This is due to the fact that both dialogues seek to be comprehensive. As a consequence, they formulate and refute a number of seemingly derivative arguments, giving the reader the impression of redundancy. The proximity of Freud's writing to Schopenhauer's points of view is qualified in the final passage, where Freud reflects on the conditions of meta-psychological insight. On the one hand, he argues that "our mental apparatus has been developed precisely in the attempt to explore the external world, and it must therefore have realised in its structure some degree of expediency" (Freud 1927, 71); on the other hand, he feels that it is inadequate to explore the internal world: "It is once again merely an illusion to expect anything from intuition and introspection; they can give us nothing but particulars about our own mental life, which are hard to interpret, never any information about the questions which religious doctrine finds it so easy to answer" (Freud, 1927, 40).

Here Freud equates intuition and introspection with religion and illusion, whereas Schopenhauer would tentatively argue – at least in the essay discussed here – that the expediency of the apparatus is not limited to the outer world. If it is true – as Freud also asserts – that our faculties adequately represent our conditions of perception, it should be possible to perceive "intuition and introspection" in a manner that does not adhere to dogmatic religious views. While Schopenhauer is no less critical about religion than Freud, he upholds the possibility of a fundamentally different experience, "not some philosophical fable," but the "enviable life of so many saints and great souls among the Christians, and even more among the Hindus and the Buddhists" (WWR I, 383). Schopenhauer does not group this realm of experience with religion. By accounting for an experience apart from *The World as Will and Representation*, i.e., apart from the world as we think and feel about it, he marks out a wider horizon of human experience than Freud. Hence, Freud's conflation of intuition and illusion marks his distance from Schopenhauer, in order to claim some originality when there was so little difference from Schopenhauer in most of their criticism of religion. While *Future of an Illusion* constitutes an example of the unacknowledged proximity of Freud's meta-psychological writing to Schopenhauer, it also illustrates Freud's efforts to break away from Schopenhauer by instating two fundamental differences, namely by narrowing the scope of

the human experience and by disallowing an intuitive approach to the body and its experiences.

4. Conclusion

In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), Freud embraced the discrepancy between intellect and will, which Schopenhauer had developed earlier, and modeled his text on Schopenhauer's "On the Theory of the Ludicrous," apparent in the combination of analysis, classification and jokes as examples. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud recasts the structure of Schopenhauer's argument in his own mould. Schopenhauer suggests that a part of the unconscious mind is aware of the inevitability of death. It arranges fateful events – and particularly the unpleasant ones – to compel the individual away from the identification with the pleasant and the unpleasant, as a preparation for death, in which the individual is severed from all objects (PP I, 222). The individual significance of the events in hindsight is really a fallacy: by necessity, the unconscious will has to intervene in accordance with the law of cause and effect to manifest in the individual circumstances. Therefore, both essays explain the purpose of unpleasant experiences with reference to the primordial position of death in relation to life. The difference lies in the fact that, according to Schopenhauer, the will operates in view of the inevitability of death, and as such death constitutes a momentum for the will, whereas Freud conflates death and the driving force of the will to arrive at the death drive. In *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), Freud adopts both the dialogic structure and most of the arguments for and against religion from Schopenhauer's "A Dialogue." Yet the only explicit references to Schopenhauer are to be found in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* the text which shows the most indirect appropriation among the texts compared here. Freud's statement about having read Schopenhauer for the first time in 1919 (in the letter to Lou Andreas-Salome) seems odd, because Freud's appropriation of Schopenhauer goes back to at least the turn of the century, to *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905) and *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). As discussed earlier, laying claim to originality was a concern for Freud, and of course it appears that Freud omitted references to Schopenhauer. But the proximity of many of the textual components also suggests that Freud's intellectual environment was so saturated with Schopenhauer's ideas that Freud could not avoid adopting them. The problem of unacknowledged sources aside, modeling his texts in part on Schopenhauer may have seemed to be an appropriate way to increase credibility and to advance the debate.

While it seems that in some writings Freud only produced slight variations of systematizations we find in Schopenhauer's, Freud continued the process of interpretation and differentiation which had shaped him during his own intellectual formation. Hence Freud derived inspiration for his meta-psychology from Schopenhauer's metaphysics, made creative use of Schopenhauer's insights and added his own psychological observations and perspectives to analytic structures inherited from Schopenhauer.

See also 8 Schopenhauer on Sex, Love and Emotions; 10 Schopenhauer's *On the Will in Nature*: The Reciprocal Containment of Idealism and Realism; 20 Schopenhauer on the Inevitability of Unhappiness.

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22

Schopenhauer's Impact on European Literature

PAUL BISHOP

In one of his unpublished fragments Schopenhauer asked "who am I?" and supplied the following answer: "I am the man who has written *The World as Will and Representation*" (MR IV, 488). That identity, as a philosophical author and as the man who had given "a solution to the great problem of existence which will perhaps render obsolete all previous solutions" (MR IV, 488), determines Schopenhauer's impact on European literature, and the extent to which he was read – and misread. Richard Wagner, Wilhelm Raabe, Friedrich Nietzsche, Leo Tolstoy, Ivan Turgenev, Émile Zola, Guy de Maupassant, Marcel Proust, Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence, Franz Kafka, Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann, Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges – if there is anything that connects the names of these writers, just some of the most famous in a seemingly endless list, it is that Schopenhauer made an impact upon them in one way or another. Now the notion of "influence studies" is a complex and controversial one, about which it is easy to be pedantic. Indeed, in the 1960s the term "influence" was replaced, particularly in the German-speaking world, by the notion of "reception" (*Rezeption*). In line with the principles of reception theory, this contribution examines some of the most important, and arguably most interesting, cases of Schopenhauer's impact on other writers; that is, those cases where we know that a writer read Schopenhauer, where his subsequent writings deal with themes associated with Schopenhauer, and where that treatment casts new light on the range of possible interpretations of the philosopher. Within the space available, such an account cannot be fully comprehensive, but seeks rather to be as representative as possible.

Bertrand Russell is not alone in noting that Schopenhauer's appeal "has always been less to professional philosophers than to artistic and literary people in search of philosophy that they could believe" (Russell 1946, 722). But why is this? As one commentator has observed, "Schopenhauer's appeal cannot be divorced from his own stature as a literary writer," since "his beautiful prose and his grasp of structure and drama – every step in the narrative marked by a powerful image and timed for maximum effect

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– make the transition from philosophical system to novel or opera stage almost as smooth as it could be" (Janaway 1994, 120). Moreover, within his philosophical system aesthetics occupies a central place. "Not merely philosophy," Schopenhauer wrote, "but also the fine arts work at bottom towards the solution of the problem of existence" (WWR II, 406). Even if, in Schopenhauer's view, "all the arts speak only the naïve and childlike language of *perception* [*Anschauung*], not the abstract and serious language of reflection [*Reflexion*]" (WWR II, 406), the experience of "aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful" (*die ästhetische Freude am Schönen*) is itself of signal importance, for "when we enter the state of pure contemplation [*Kontemplation*], we are raised for the moment above all willing, above all desires and cares; we are, so to speak, rid of ourselves" (WWR I, 390). Hence, in the first volume of *WWR*, Schopenhauer examined at some length the extent to which the various art forms contributed to the cessation of willing. Schopenhauer developed a hierarchy of the arts in which literature came second only to music.[1] According to Schopenhauer, in the lyric poem, as exemplified by "the immortal songs of Goethe," both "willing . . . and pure perception [*das reine Anschauen*] of the environment" are "wonderfully blended with each other" (WWR I, 250). Only in music, however, do we find "not a copy of the phenomenon, or, more exactly, of the will's adequate objectivity," but "directly a copy of the will itself," so that music "expresses the metaphysical to everything physical in the world, the thing-in-itself to every phenomenon" (WWR I, 262).

Reason enough, then, for the attention of Richard Wagner (1813–1833) to have been caught by Schopenhauer (Magee 1983, 326–78; Magee 2000, 126–73). And Wagner deserves inclusion in a discussion of Schopenhauer's impact on literature, since Wagner himself was a producer of texts, both dramatic (the libretti for his operas) and theoretical (Furness 1982); moreover, the notion of the "total work-of-art" (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) involves the combination of literature with all other art forms, and Schopenhauer, it has been argued, exercised an important influence on the development of Wagner's concept. True, Wagner had already written several major theoretical statements, composed six operas, and begun to prepare the libretti for the *Ring* cycle when, in 1854, he read *WWR*. But, looking back in his autobiography, *My Life* (1911), Wagner wrote that he had been fascinated by "the clearness and manly precision with which the most difficult metaphysical problems were treated" (Wagner 1994, 615). In his letters from this period, Wagner expresses his excitement about his discovery. "I have finally found a sedative," he told Liszt, "which helps me to sleep during wakeful nights; it is the genuine, innermost longing for death: absolute unconsciousness, total annihilation, the disappearance of all dreams – our ultimate redemption!" (Mayer 1959, 80–81). Wagner claimed to have studied *WWR* no fewer than four times: "the effect thus gradually wrought upon me was extraordinary, and certainly exerted a decisive influence on the whole course of my life," he claimed (Wagner 1994, 616). In theoretical terms, the encounter with Schopenhauer's philosophy, with its emphasis on music as "directly a copy of the will itself" (WWR I, 262), forced Wagner to revise his concept of the total work-of-art, reformulating his conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a synthesis of music, poetry, and visual drama more carefully as a fusion of music and visual action (Stein 1947). In artistic terms, the work which most closely shows the impact of Schopenhauer is arguably *Tristan und Isolde* (1854/1855; 1859). "All love (*agape*, *caritas*) is pity," Schopenhauer had written, and "all love that is not pity is

egotism" (WWR I, 374; 376); in his *Tristan*, Wagner applies this doctrine to erotic love, celebrating the temporary abolition of self in sexual passion, and its permanent dissolution in the *Liebestod* ("death-in-love").

Wagner saw Schopenhauer as "a man who has come like a gift from heaven, if only a literary one, into my solitude," whose "chief idea" – "the final denial of the will to life" – was "of terrible earnestness, but the only one that redeems" (Mayer 1959, 80–81). At Christmas 1854 Wagner sent Schopenhauer a copy of the libretto of *The Ring* (to which, much to Wagner's regret, Schopenhauer never replied), and reading *WWR* assisted Wagner in completing the composition of his masterpiece. "Everything that was already completed ripe within me; indeed, what I had in fact precisely depicted in my work on Wotan [i.e., *The Ring*], has been brought to certain consciousness in me by this clear, deep, and powerful mind: the only possible salvation through the most thorough-going renunciation," Wagner told Emilie Ritter (Wagner 1995, 274). Such remarks may well have influenced the view of the Schopenhauer–Wagner relation held by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) and expressed in *The Case of Wagner* (1888) in a celebrated passage:

> I shall still relate the story of the *Ring*. . . . Half his life, Wagner believed in the Revolution as much as ever a Frenchman believed in it. He searched for it in the runic writing of myth, he believed that in Siegfried he had found the typical revolutionary. . . . For a long time, Wagner's ship followed *this* course gaily. No doubt, this was where Wagner sought his highest goal. – What happened? A misfortune. The ship struck a reef; Wagner was stuck. The reef was Schopenhauer's philosophy; Wagner was stranded on a *contrary* world view. What had he transposed into music? Optimism. Wagner was ashamed. . . . So he translated the *Ring* into Schopenhauer's terms. Everything goes wrong, everything perishes, the new world is as band as the old: the *nothing*, the Indian Circe beckons.
>
> (Nietzsche 1968a, 619–20)

And so, in Nietzsche's eyes, Brunnhilde has to study Schopenhauer and "transpose the fourth book of *The World as Will and Representation*" – which treats of the doctrine of salvation through the denial of the will – "into verse." Or in terms of the stage-action, Brunnhilde rides into the blazing flames of Siegfried's funeral pyre, Valhalla catches fire, and the Rhine overflows its banks. A triumph of pessimism, if ever there was one.

Now, Nietzsche – himself a philosopher with eminently literary qualities – spoke as one who had had his own "Schopenhauer experience." As a student of theology in Leipzig, Nietzsche came across a copy of *WWR* in a secondhand bookshop. "I do not know what sort of demon whispered to me, 'Take this book home with you'" (Nietzsche 1966, Vol. III, 133). Back at home, Nietzsche threw himself onto the sofa, and began to allow "the dark, dynamic genius" of Schopenhauer to take effect. "Here, every line cried out renunciation, negation, resignation; here I found a mirror, in which I saw the world, life, and my own self in terrible magnification. Here the completely disinterested solar eye of art looked at me, here I saw sickness and salvation, exile and refuge, hell and heaven," Nietzsche recalled (Nietzsche 1966, vol. 3, 133). Sharing with Wagner an intense admiration for the philosopher, in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) Nietzsche drew extensively on *WWR*, although subtly inverting its sense. Yet despite his initial enthusiasm, Nietzsche began to distance himself from Schopenhauer (as he did, too, from Wagner). In his third *Untimely Meditation*, "Schopenhauer as Educator" (1874), he

praised the philosopher as an example of an uncompromising radicalness of thought, rather than expounding or analyzing his system (Janaway 1998, 13–36). But what an example! Nietzsche compares Schopenhauer to Montaigne, not just in terms of honesty, but also because of his cheerfulness (a quality accurately, but rarely, ascribed to him), contrasting the image of humankind found in Schopenhauer with that of Rousseau, and of Goethe. Schopenhauer, Nietzsche declared, put his fellow academics to shame. "Of all the offence Schopenhauer has given to numerous scholars," he wrote, with heavy irony, "nothing has offended them more than the unfortunate fact that he does not resemble them" (Nietzsche 1983, 182). And, like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche prized nothing more highly than originality of thought: "While the genuine thinker longs for nothing more than he longs for leisure, the ordinary scholar flees from it because he does not know what to do with it" (Nietzsche 1983, 172; cf. PP II, § 262).

Over time, however, Nietzsche came to reject Schopenhauer's conclusions, replacing the will-to-life with the will-to-power, inverting Schopenhauer's alleged pessimism into an almost hysterical optimism, and working through Schopenhauer's nihilism to his own "revaluation of all values." Around 1876, Nietzsche recalled, "I grasped that my instinct went into the opposite direction from Schopenhauer's: towards a *justification of life*, even at its most terrible, ambiguous, and mendacious; for this I had the formula '*Dionysian*'" (Nietzsche 1968b, 521). The identification of the "in-itself" as Will had been, in Nietzsche's view, "an essential step," but Schopenhauer had not understood "how to *deify* this will," remaining "entangled in the moral-Christian ideal" (Nietzsche 1968b, 521). *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), in particular, casts a critical eye on Schopenhauer's aesthetics and his praise for the ascetic ideal, when Nietzsche takes him to task for the "vehemence of diction," the "images of torment and long despair" in his evocation of the aesthetic condition (Nietzsche 1968a, 541). In particular, Nietzsche looks askance at Schopenhauer's exclusion of the possibility that "the sweetness and plenitude peculiar to the aesthetic state might be derived precisely from the ingredient of 'sensuality'," instead contending that "sensuality is not overcome by the appearance of the aesthetic condition, as Schopenhauer believed, but only transfigured and no longer enters consciousness as sexual excitement" (Nietzsche 1968a, 547).

Schopenhauer's emphasis on philosophy as a *communicative activity*, which reaches over the heads of professional (that is to say, academic) philosophers to seek out intelligent readers from any background, is one found in Nietzsche, too, the author of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1882–1884, a book for Everyone – or No-one).[2] Yet it is surely in terms of literary style that Nietzsche's debt to Schopenhauer is greatest. Although the complex hypotaxis of Schopenhauer's prose is saturated in the atmosphere of the nineteenth century, and contrasts with the elliptical, compressed and highly concentrated style of Nietzsche's writing, both delighted in the stylistic possibilities of German prose, preferring to couch their arguments in startling and persuasive images. Indeed, for Schopenhauer, style is "the physiognomy of the spirit" (PP II, § 282); for Nietzsche, style is something equally physiological, inasmuch as style aims "to communicate a state, an inward tension of pathos, by means of signs" – including, Nietzsche adds, "the tempo of these signs" (Nietzsche 1968a, 721), thereby highlighting the chief point of contrast between his style and Schopenhauer's. In the statement "The formula of my happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a *goal*" (Nietzsche 1954, 473), for instance, we see a terse, condensed formulation of the following passage:

> As our physical path on earth is always a line and not a surface, we must in life, if we wish to grasp and possess one thing, renounce and leave aside innumerable others that lie to the right and to the left. If we cannot decide to do this, but, like children at a fair, snatch at everything that fascinates us in passing, this is the perverted attempt to change the line of our path into a surface. We then run a zigzag path, wander like the will-o'-the-wisp, and arrive at nothing.
>
> (WWR I, 303)

According to one commentator, "it is strange that the period of Schopenhauer's most intense influence does not stretch much beyond the 1920s" (Janaway 2002, 121). As we shall see, there is good evidence of a longer-lasting influence, but a writer who spans the period described by Janaway *and* takes us beyond it is Thomas Mann (1875–1955). For Mann, Schopenhauer belonged, along Nietzsche and Wagner, to "a triad of eternally united spirits" (Mann 1974, Vol. XII, 79), and he frequently cited Nietzsche's remark in a letter to Erwin Rohde (October 8, 1868), "I like in Wagner what I like in Schopenhauer: the moral fervour, the Faustian flavour, the Cross, Death, and the Tomb" (Mann 1974, Vol. XII, 541). In some ways it is hard to separate Schopenhauer's specific impact on Mann from that of the other "stars," as he put it, in "the whole fateful complex and galaxy, a world, the German world" (Mann 1933, 150), in "the firmament of our youth, Germany and Europe at the same time" – in the midst of which Dürer, Goethe, Nietzsche and Wagner also cluster (Mann 1947, 89). Yet of the extent of Schopenhauer's impact on him, Mann himself had no doubt. In an autobiographical sketch of 1930, Mann wrote that, whereas reading Nietzsche had been more of an "intellectual-artistic" experience, his reading of Schopenhauer had been "a *spiritual* (*seelisches*) experience of the first order and of an unforgettable nature" (Mann 1974, Vol. XI, 111). According to Mann, after having brought the Brockhaus edition in a bookseller's sale, it had lain unread for several years, "until the hour came that bade me read, and so I read, for days and nights, as one can only ever read once" (Mann 1974, Vol. XI, 111). In essence, Mann discovered in Schopenhauer "a metaphysical intoxication, which had much to do with the late and sudden emergence of sexual maturity . . . and which had more to do with ecstatic mysticism than actual philosophy" (Mann 1974, Vol. XI, 111). To "this profound, even shattering impression made upon me as a young man with the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer," Mann subsequently erected "a monument" in "the pages of *Buddenbrooks*," Mann's great novel published in 1901 (Mann 1947, 415). Here (in part five, chapter 10) the senator Thomas Buddenbrook picks up a book which, like Mann himself, he had acquired by chance years ago at a reduced price. Reading it outside in his garden on warm summer's day, Buddenbrook undergoes, like Thomas Mann, a kind of philosophical conversion. One of its chapters is entitled "On Death and its Relation to the Indestructibility of Our Essential Being," which clearly echoes Schopenhauer (cf. WWR I, § 54; WWR II, ch. 41; PP II, ch. 10), but if the work Buddenbrook reads is indeed Schopenhauer, then the conclusions he draws from it are wrong and his reading is an inaccurate one – also like Thomas Mann's? Not at all: according to Mann, the episode in *Buddenbrooks* shows how "one can think in the *sense* of a philosopher without in the least thinking according to his sense" (Mann 1947, 396). Mann makes this point in a major essay, entitled simply "Schopenhauer" (1938), which offers one of the most insightful and, for all its terminological slippage, intellectually sophisticated responses to the philosopher to date: it constitutes nothing less than a

"mini-companion" to Schopenhauer's thought. Understanding *WWR* as a symphony in four movements (Mann 1947, 392 and 394), the focus of Mann's discussion is centered on Schopenhauer's aesthetics, and their relation to what one might call a vitalist ethics. With reference to Hans Castorp's remark in *The Magic Mountain* (1924) that "if one is interested in life, then one is interested in death," Mann describes this comment as "the trail of Schopenhauer, deeply imprinted, valid throughout life" (Mann 1947, 394). For Mann, Schopenhauer is, as far his aesthetics is concerned, a "classical humanist"; in his view of asceticism, he is a "Romantic"; but, taken as a whole, his "mental life, the dualistic overstrained irritability and fever of his genius, is less Romantic than it is modern" – or even "futurist" (Mann 1947, 401, 405, 407). Schopenhauerian themes emerge again in Mann's later work, *The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man* (1954), in the form of the topos of illusion and the grotesque-cum-carnivalesque world view conjured up by Professor Kuckuck; as has been pointed out, Krull's "insomniac excitement" at Kuckuck's "Schopenhauerian vision of an active universe" (see Book 3, chapter 5) can be interpreted as a parody of Thomas Buddenbrook's "metaphysical ecstasy" (Apter 1978, 131). And the philosopher continued to remain a reference-point in Mann's diaries and correspondence, as when he attributed to Schopenhauer the view that patience is a form of heroism.

There is a specifically Austrian dimension to Schopenhauer reception, both among the composers, artists and thinkers of the so-called Pernerstorfer Circle – including Victor Adler (1852–1918), Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), and Siegfried Lipiner (1856–1925) (see McGrath 1974) – and among such *fin de siècle* writers as Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931), Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929), and Leopold von Andrian-Werburg (1875–1951), as well as the writers, notably Hermann Broch (1887–1924), Karl Kraus (1874–1936) and Robert Musil (1880–1942), of the later "generation of 1905," among which the philosophers Rudolf Kassner (1873–1959), Otto Weininger (1880–1903) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) may also be counted (see Luft 1983). As one commentator has written, "here is little doubt of Schopenhauer's great influence in Vienna in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (Luft 1983, 54), which developed for two reasons. First, "because of his undeniable status as a post-Kantian philosopher, as a North German thinker who belonged to an intellectual tradition that was repeatedly rejected by Austrian Catholics, rationalists, and empiricists," including Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841) and Franz Brentano (1838–1917); and, second, because Schopenhauer was "not so alien to Austrian thought as Hegel," and provided a focus, for the generation of 1905, for "the interconnected preoccupations with morality, sexuality, feminism, and mysticism," thereby allowing us to see "some of the nuances in Austrian attitudes toward post-Kantian thought" (Luft 1983, 54; 70).

One of Schopenhauer's main images in *WWR* is the castle. In Volume I, he writes that "we can never get at the inner nature of things *from without*," for "however much we may investigate, we obtain nothing but images and names," so that "we are like a man who goes round a castle, looking in vain for an entrance, and sometimes sketching façades" (WWR I, § 17; Schopenhauer 1966, 99). According to Schopenhauer, such is the path all philosophers before him had followed. From an entry in his Notebooks (*Oktavhefte*), we know that Franz Kafka (1883–1924) first began reading Schopenhauer in 1916 or 1917; in fact, it had been at a lecture given on Schopenhauer in 1902 that Kafka had met his friend and future literary executor, Max Brod (see Reed 1965;

Zilcosky 1991). It is tempting, then, and in fact probably right, to regard Schopenhauer as a likely source of inspiration for Kafka's novel *The Castle* (1922; pub. 1926). To the eyes of K., the castle is

> a rambling pile consisting of innumerable small buildings closely packed together and of one or two storeys . . . There was only one tower as far as he could see . . . Swarms of crows were circling it. . . . It was as if a melancholy-mad tenant who ought to have been locked in the topmost chamber of his house had burst through the roof and lifted himself up to the gaze of the world.
>
> (Kafka 1976, 280–81)

Unlike the man in Schopenhauer's parable, K. does eventually get inside the castle; unlike Schopenhauer, who claims to hold the solution to "the riddle of the world" (WWR I, 141), however, K. never understands, at least not directly, the purpose of his calling as land surveyor. While Kafka may also have had other literary castles in mind (such as the "castle of wisdom" in J.A. Comenius's *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* (1623; pub. 1631)), "the fact that neither K. nor his audience ever reaches the moment of Schopenhauerian enlightenment renders his suffering meaningless and results in the cruellest of all possible tragedies" (Zilcosky 1991, 367). Certainly, other works by Kafka (such as "In the Penal Colony" (1914; pub. 1919) or "A Hunger Artist" (1922)) concern themselves with the Schopenhauerian question of the meaning of suffering (cf. PP II, ch. 11; see Satz and Ozsvath 1978), and in the posthumously published "Reflections on Sin, Suffering, Hope and the True Way" as well as in his Notebooks, the metaphysical dimension of suffering is explored by Kafka in some detail.

> Suffering is the positive element of this world; indeed, it is the only connection between this world and the positive," one aphorism runs, "only here is suffering suffering. Not so that those who suffer here, will elsewhere be elevated because of their suffering, but rather so that what in this world is called suffering is, in another world, unchanged but liberated from its opposite – bliss.
>
> (Kafka 1986, 80)

Typically, Kafka's response to any intellectual source is complex, but his much-quoted remark to the effect that "there is plenty of hope – only not for us," while indeed demonstrating "some affinity with Schopenhauer's take on the world," is perhaps ultimately more Schopenhauerian in its irony than in its sentiment (Politzer 1993).

From the writers discussed thus far, one might imagine that Schopenhauer's impact was limited to German-speaking writers, but this is far from being the case. In France, for example, Schopenhauer exercised an influence that could well be called pervasive (see Boillot 1927; Colin 1979). Although *The World as Will and Representation* was not translated into French until 1886 (by J.-A. Cantacuzène) and 1888 (by Auguste Burdeau), a selection of short texts was edited by Jean Bourdeau and published under the title *Pensées, maximes et fragments* in 1880, the same year in which J.-A. Cantacuzène's translation of the aphorisms on worldly wisdom from the *Parerga and Paralipomena* appeared. Thus Schopenhauer was largely associated – much as, rightly or wrongly, he has always been – with the doctrine of pessimism (see Caro 1878; Lalande 1991, 763). Émile Zola (1840–1902), for example, entitled his Schopenhauerian novel

in his *Rougon-Macquart* series – with some irony – *The Joy of Living* (*La Joie de vivre*) (1884), for the story of Pauline, the Chanteau family, and their village has rightly been described as "a novel of pain" (cf. Magee 1983, 381–82). Equally, Marcel Proust (1871–1922) is widely held to have been "an admirer of Schopenhauer" (Hindus 1962, 132), and no less eminent a commentator than Patrick Gardiner (1963, 202) has written that "the kernel of Schopenhauer's account of the artist's approach to the world finds perhaps its most striking echo" in *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–1927), particularly the conception of art expressed in *Le Temps retrouvé* (1927). Arguably the most prominent response to Schopenhauer, however, can be found in the work of Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848–1907). The ethos inspired by Schopenhauer informed the title of one of his early novels, *With the Flow* (*À vau-l'eau*) (1882), where the central character, the unfortunate Monsieur Folantin, concludes that "you have to let yourself go with the flow," because "Schopenhauer is right": "man's life swings like a pendulum between pain and boredom" (Huysmans 2003, 57; cf. WWR I, § 57). The reference is more than a throw-away line: it sustains the outlook of much of Huysmans's writing of the early and middle periods (Gaillard 2001). So it is not surprising to find that Schopenhauer figures prominently among the artists and thinkers admired by Des Esseintes in *Against Nature* (*À rebours*) (1884), the archetypal novel of the French *décadence*. The aesthete-cum-aristocrat calls on "the consoling maxims" of Schopenhauer in order to "soothe his wounded spirit," and finds in "the great German's aphorisms" a contrast – and a complement – to Catholicism (Huysmans 1959, 219). "Setting off from the same starting-point as the *Imitation* [*of Christ*], but without losing itself in mysterious mazes and unlikely by-paths, this theory reached," Des Esseintes discovers, "the same conclusion, an attitude of resignation and drift":

> He did not drum into your ears the revolting dogma of original sin; he did not try to convince you of the superlative goodness of a God who protects the wicked, helps the foolish, crushes the young, brutalizes the old, and chastises the innocent; he did not extol the benefits of a Providence which has invented the useless, unjust, incomprehensible, and inept abomination that is physical pain. Indeed, far from endeavouring, like the Church, to justify the necessity of trials and torments, he exclaimed in his compassionate indignation: "If a God has made this world, I should hate to be that God, for the misery of the world would break my heart." Yes, it was undoubtedly Schopenhauer who was in the right.
> (Huysmans 1959, 92–93)[3]

Similarly, echoes of Schopenhauer have been detected in Huysmans's later novel, *Becalmed* (*En rade*) (1887) (see Roger 1987). Over time, in the course of his conversion to Catholicism, Huysmans came to distance himself from Schopenhauer. By the time he came to write his preface for the 1903 edition of *À rebours*, Huysmans was able to write, punningly: "The observations of Schopenhauer amount to nothing; he leaves you, so to speak, high and dry; his aphorisms are, in sum, a mere herbarium of dry (com)pla(i)nts (*de plaintes sèches*); the Church, however, explains the origins and the causes, indicates the results, presents the remedies" (Huysmans 2005, 566). The rejection of Schopenhauer was an unavoidable price that Huysmans had to pay for his conversion. And Huysmans is not the only writer who has embraced, but then, after further consideration, turned away from, Schopenhauer.

A major step towards Schopenhauer's mediation to the English-speaking world was taken in the form of an article, "Iconoclasm in German Philosophy," unsigned but written by John Oxenford (1812–1877), a translator of Goethe, in the *Westminster Review* in April 1853. Here Schopenhauer received praise for his subversion of the whole system of German philosophy and for "the peculiar charm of his writings," as well as for being "one of the most ingenious and readable authors in the world" and "a formidable hitter of adversaries." Thus the legend of the "misanthropic sage of Frankfort" was born in the English-speaking world ([Oxenford] 1853, 389; 407).

The association of Schopenhauer with the doctrine of pessimism can be clearly seen in his reception by the English novelist, Thomas Hardy (1840–1928). According to Julian Young (2005, 236), "one has only to recall Thomas Hardy's looming Wessex skies to see how strong is his affinity for Schopenhauerian pessimism," and it is largely an affinity of feeling rather than intellectual response that conditions Schopenhauer's impact on Hardy. Numerous studies have noted that Hardy probably read *The World as Will and Representation* during the mid 1880s (i.e., during the composition of *The Woodlanders* (1887), and continued to study him thereafter, including during the composition of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895)) (Magee 1983, 383–85; see Garwood 1911; Brennecke 1924; Bailey 1966). Hardy's designation of God as "It" or the "Immanent Will," however, derives as much from his reading of Schopenhauer as from, in the words of David Wright (1978, 13), "the extreme gentleness and compassion" of Hardy's own nature. Such poems as "God's Funeral," "Panthera" and the "In Tenebris" sequence, offer eloquent testimony to the firmness of Hardy's rejection of Judeo-Christianity. To a certain extent, this is a question of sensibility: Hardy's contemporary, A.E. Housman (1859–1936), who penned the famous lines, "And malt does more than Milton can / To justify God's ways to man" (*A Shropshire Lad* (1896), no. 62; Housman 1939, 63), strikes much the same note on some of his poems. Yet the predominant influences on Housman were *Ecclesiastes*, Lucretius, and Matthew Arnold (the author of "Dover Beach," that so well captured the decline of Christianity in the image of the retreating waves of the "Sea of Faith"), rather than Schopenhauer; after all, Housman is said to have described himself as a Cyrenaic, and as "not a pessimist but a pejorist, one who believed that the world could be a worse place" (Horwood 1971, 28). In his general preface to the Wessex Edition of his works (1912), Hardy specifically questioned the application to his outlook of the word "pessimistic." "It must be obvious than there is a higher characteristic of philosophy than pessimism, or than melioration, or even than the optimism of these critics – which is truth," he argued, for "existence is either ordered in a certain way, or it is not so ordered, and conjectures – which harmonize best with experience are removed above all comparison with other conjectures which do not so harmonize" (Hardy 1978, 495). Nevertheless, it is sometimes hard to not hear some distinct, almost verbal echoes of Schopenhauer in Hardy's prose. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), to take just one example, Tess's brother concludes, following the death of their father's horse, and in the light of an earlier conversation with his sister, "'Tis because we be on a blighted star, and not a sound one, isn't it, Tess?" (Hardy 1978, 72); the narrative voice comments that "why so often the coarse appropriates the finer thus, the wrong man the woman, the wrong woman the man, many thousand years of analytical philosophy have failed to explain to our sense of order" (Hardy 1978, 119); and, when Angel Clare reflects on "the harrowing

contingencies of human experience, the unexpectedness of things," we read that "the night came in, and took up its place there, unconcerned and indifferent; the night which had already swallowed up his happiness, and was now digesting it listlessly; and was ready to swallow up the happiness of a thousand other people with as little disturbance or change of mien" (Hardy 1978, 305). Tess's departure in chapter 38 prompts Clare to invert the words of Robert Browning, "God's *not* in his heaven: all's *wrong* with the world!" (Hardy 1978, 325); whilst over and above the words of the biblical Preacher, that "all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1.1), Tess reflects that

> this was a most inadequate thought for modern days. Solomon had thought as far as that more than two thousand years ago; she herself, thought not in the van of thinkers, had got much further. If all were only vanity, who would mind it? All was, alas, worse than vanity – injustice, punishment, exaction, death.
>
> (Hardy 1978, 351)

As the tragedy of her life plays itself out, it seems to Tess that Wordsworth's lines "Not in utter nakedness / But trailing clouds of glory do we come" are in fact a "ghastly satire," for "birth itself was an ordeal of degrading personal compulsion, whose gratuitousness nothing in the result seemed to justify, and at best could only palliate" (Hardy 1978, 441). In chapter 55, Clare realizes that "Tess had spiritually ceased to recognize the body before him as hers – allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will" (Hardy 1978, 467); Tess's moaning is heard by the landlady "as if it came from a soul bound to some Ixionian wheel" (cf. WWR I, 196); and, as if allegorizing Schopenhauer's doctrine of salvation, Tess reflects, looking out of the window of the mansion, that "all is trouble outside there; inside here content," a view with which Angel Clare concurs: "It was quite true; within was affection, union, error forgiven; outside was the inexorable" (Hardy 1978, 481).

In the case of W. Somerset Maugham (1874–1965), his *Of Human Bondage* (1915) testifies to an interest in Schopenhauer on the part of its author. In this semi-autobiographical novel, Philip Carey attends university at Heidelberg, where "Kuno Fischer was then at the height of his fame and during winter had been lecturing brilliantly on Schopenhauer." Philip finds "an unexpected fascination in listening to metaphysical disquisitions," which "made him breathless, like watching a tight-rope dancer doing perilous feats over an abyss." "The pessimism of the subject attracted his youth," we learn, "and he believed that the world he was about to enter was a place of pitiless woe and of darkness" (Maugham 1963, 129). Almost identical words can be found in Maugham's actual autobiography, *The Summing Up* (1938), where the impact of Schopenhauer (as well as Darwin) is equally evident (Maugham 2001, 232–35).

Thomas Mann claimed that Schopenhauer's character was not so much Romantic as modern; his belief is borne out by Schopenhauer's impact on James Joyce (1882–1941). It has been convincingly argued that the aesthetic schemata developed by Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914–1915) owe less to, as often thought, Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, and more to the dark Danziger, Schopenhauer. The debts of Dedalean aesthetics include the division of literature into lyric, epic and dramatic forms (cf. WWR I, § 51); the notion of "epiphany" (cf. WWR I, § 36; WWR II, ch. 31), the theory of aesthetic stasis (cf. WWR II, ch. 30), and the essentially

tragic function of art (cf. WWR I, § 51) (Caufield 1998, 698–707). And affinities with the bleaker aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophical vision are arguably present in the work of Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) (Knowles 1994), Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) (Dobrez 1986, 123–27), and Ted Hughes (1930–1998).

Schopenhauer's impact on nineteenth-century writers in Russia was equally massive, and can only be outlined here in the briefest of detail. After finishing *War and Peace* (1863–1869) and before turning to *Anna Karenina* (1873–1877), Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) turned to an intensive reading of Schopenhauer. His reaction is captured in his letter to A.A. Fet of August 30, 1869, in which he wrote: "Do you know what this summer has meant for me? Constant raptures over Schopenhauer and a whole series of spiritual delights which I've never experienced before. . . . It's the whole world in an incredibly clear and beautiful reflection" (Magee 1983, 379). To demonstrate his enthusiasm for the philosopher, Tolstoy hung a picture of Schopenhauer on the wall of his study, but over time Tolstoy shifted away from the author of *The World as Will and Representation* as he moved, like Huysmans did, towards religion – in this case, not towards Roman Catholicism but towards Orthodoxy. In his *Confession* (1879), Tolstoy cites the stunning paragraph with which the first volume of *WWR* concludes (Tolstoy 1987, 11), makes a distinction between "true philosophy" and "what Schopenhauer calls professorial philosophy" (Tolstoy 1987, 40), and proposes an outline account of his reaction and response to Schopenhauer as follows:

> It was only at first that I thought knowledge had given an affirmative answer, Schopenhauer's answer that life has no meaning and is evil. But when I went into the matter I realized that this answer is not affirmative and that it was only my senses that had taken it to be so. Strictly expressed, as it is by the Brahmins, Solomon, and Schopenhauer, the answer is but a vague one, an identity . . . Thus, philosophical knowledge denies nothing but simply replies that it cannot solve the question, and that as far as it is concerned any resolution remains indefinite.
>
> (Tolstoy 1987, 53)

And thus Tolstoy ultimately placed the answers of religion above both the questions and the answers of philosophy – including Schopenhauer's: "I was inevitably led to acknowledge that there does exist another kind of knowledge – an irrational one – possessed by humanity as a whole: faith, which affords the possibility of living" (Tolstoy 1987, 53).

One can also detect the impact of Schopenhauer in the case of Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev (1818–1883), for whom the philosopher is said to have provided "an inestimably valuable framework for the integration of his views" (Walicki 1962, 17; cf. McLaughlin 1984). In Berlin, Turgenev moved in circles associated with German idealism, and he found that Schopenhauer accorded with his own rejection of the revolutionary ambition of, say, Bakunin. Schopenhauer's influence is most conspicuous in Turgenev's *Poems in Prose*, and the doctrine of the denial of the will clearly informs, for example, his essay entitled *Enough!*: "One way is left a man to keep his feet, not to fall to pieces, not to sink into the mire of self-forgetfulness . . . of self-contempt, – calmly to turn away from everything, to save the last, the sole honour he can attain to, the dignity of knowing his own nothingness" (Turgenev 1899, 313–14). According to Leonard

Schapiro (1978, 207–208), such Schopenhauerian themes as "the illusion that man can attain happiness, which is in essence nothing but deliverance from pain," or "the insignificance of man in the scheme of nature which pursues its own course, its will, with total disregard for his existence," abound in the writings of Turgenev; as always in reception history, the difficulties lie in tracing a distinct line of filiation, and in understanding its significance.

Throughout the twentieth century Schopenhauer functions on a certain level of popular culture as a cipher for pessimism. In P.G. Wodehouse's *Carry On, Jeeves* (1925) Schopenhauer is described as "a grouch of the most pronounced description" (Wodehouse 1991, 167). The ballad "Isn't it a Pity?" by Ira Gershwin contains the lines "My evenings were sour / Spent with Schopenhauer." Yet there was also serious work on Schopenhauer, too. In a lecture delivered on the occasion of the centenary commemoration of Schopenhauer's death, "Schopenhauer Today" (1960), for example, Max Horkheimer laid emphasis on the Utopian implications of Schopenhauer's thought and explored his potential for contributing, through the very bitterness of his condemnations, to social liberation (Horkheimer 1967, 124–41).[4]

And Schopenhauer's impact on literature continues to be felt. Gerard Donovan's novel, *Schopenhauer's Telescope* (2003) is an account of a chilling conversation that takes place between two men, a baker and a teacher, during a state of war: a large trench is being dug. Its title derives from the idea, attributed to Schopenhauer, that "to gain perspective on any problem, we should travel fifty odd years into the future and invert a telescope, look through the wrong end . . . , and make decisions with the benefit of hindsight" (Donovan 2003, 238).[5] Amid references to Locke, Hume and Heidegger, the image from Schopenhauer provides a grim perspective from eternity on the crimes committed in war, as well as, in the teacher's letter in the final chapter, the vaguest of hints of solace (Donovan 2003, 300). Nor is Donovan alone in his use of this image. An American novel, *The Schopenhauer Cure* (2005) – written by a practicing psychiatrist, Irvin D. Yalom – relates how Julius Hertzfeld, a psychotherapist suddenly confronted with the imminence of his own death, invites a former sex addict, Philip Slate, to join his intensive therapy group. As the novel interweaves an account of Schopenhauer's life and works with the dialogues of the group in their West Coast therapy sessions, it emerges that while Philip may have cured his addiction to sex by reading Schopenhauer, this is not enough, and he needs in turn "to be saved from the Schopenhauer cure." For "viewing the world through the wrong end of the telescope," it is suggested, does not address issues of "emotional accessibility" (Yalom 2005, 172; 300) – as the jargon of psychobabble puts it.[6] Finally, one of the most recent engagements with Schopenhauer is a theatrical one: Yasmina Reza's drama *In Arthur Schopenhauer's Sledge* (2005), which was premièred in German translation in Berlin in 2006. Constructed essentially of eight monologues, the play brings us into the world of a professor of philosophy, Ariel Chipman; his wife, Nadine; his friend, Serge Othon Weil; and his psychiatrist. Chipman has abandoned the optimism of his former philosophical hero, Spinoza, for the pessimistic sledge-ride into death of Schopenhauerianism. With a humor that verges on despair, Reza's play uncovers a philosophical darkness amid the characters' interpersonal relationships and their everyday lives (Reza 2005; 2006).

In short, Schopenhauer's impact on European literature consists largely in writers' responses to his pessimistic outlook, with varying degrees of philosophical

sophistication. To a certain extent, the name Schopenhauer functions as a byword for pessimism, without having to examine further the implications of the term. In this respect, many writers are no less superficial than some philosophers have been in their reception of Schopenhauer. But as more recent work shows, Schopenhauer also licences an investigation of the relation between, on the one hand, philosophy, and, on the other, psychology and psychotherapy, thereby uncovering an important aspect of his system: namely, his contributions to psychoanalysis and to a modern understanding of the ancient task of – in Pierre Hadot's words – "philosophy as a way of life."

See also 19 Life-Denial versus Life-Affirmation: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Pessimism and Asceticism; 20 Schopenhauer on the Inevitability of Unhappiness.

Notes

1 From lowest to highest, Schopenhauer's hierarchy of art forms is as follows: architecture – landscape painting – animal painting and animal sculpture – sculpture – historical painting – lyrical poetry – the novel – epic poetry – the drama – tragedy – music.
2 In the fourth part of *Zarathustra*, the figure of the Gloomy Prophet has been understood by some to represent Schopenhauer.
3 It should be noted that these sensed areas of proximity between Schopenhauer and Catholicism have, of course, been rejected by representatives of the Church (Copleston 1946, 210).
4 Horkheimer devoted other lectures and articles to different aspects of Schopenhauer, including one on contemporary pessimism (Horkheimer 1985, 43–54; 24–52; 224–32).
5 In his *Counsels and Maxims*, Schopenhauer writes that "from the standpoint of youth, life seems to stretch away into an endless future; from the standpoint of old age, to go back but a little way into the past, so that, at the beginning, life presents us with a picture in which the objects appear a great way off, as though we had reversed our telescope, while in the end everything seems so close" (Schopenhauer 2004).
6 In fact, Schopenhauer seems a popular choice for psychotherapists; alluding to the famous parable of the hedgehog's dilemma (PP II, § 396) – which had attracted Freud's attention in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) (Freud 1991, 130) – there is a self-help book entitled *Schopenhauer's Porcupines: Intimacy and Its Dilemma*, which begins with a chapter entitled "Making Room in Love for Hate" (Luepnitz 2002, 1–19).

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23

Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner

BERNARD REGINSTER

The close association between Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Wagner is well known. Schopenhauer's thought proved to be the most profound and lasting intellectual influence in Wagner's life, and it is their shared passion for Schopenhauer that brought Nietzsche and Wagner together. It is arguably also their divergent assessments of the significance of his thought that eventually led them to go their separate ways. Instead of expanding on the biographical details of these relationships, which have been well documented elsewhere,[1] I will discuss what may well be the deepest philosophical issue animating them.

Wagner reports being initially "alarmed" by the culmination of Schopenhauer's ethical thought, in which "the annihilation of the will and complete self-abnegation are represented as the only true means of redemption," largely because it does not sit well with "the so-called 'cheerful' Greek view of the world" which he had adopted in his previous works.[2] This initial resistance to Schopenhauerian renunciation, however, was quite superficial, as both Wagner himself and eventually Nietzsche came to recognize that it formed a long-standing, if unconscious, Wagnerian conviction.[3] For instance, the main characters of those operas he wrote before coming under the spell of Schopenhauer – *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin* and even *The Ring* – already exemplify an attitude very much like the Schopenhauerian negation of life.

As Wagner understood it, Schopenhauer's central insight was, in the words of one recent commentator, that "lasting happiness and fulfillment can never be found in a world in which frustration, suffering and death are the inevitable lot of everyone," from which Wagner concluded that "the true role of art . . . is an escape from this intolerable world into an alternative one" (Magee 2000, 186; see 175). From the beginning, Nietzsche's attitude to this Schopenhauerian "resignationism" is ambivalent at best: even *The Birth of Tragedy*, a self-proclaimed paean to both Schopenhauer and Wagner, proposes to find in art less an escape from this world than a seduction to it, in spite of the frustration, suffering, and death that are inevitable in it. This is still pessimism, to

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be sure, but "Dionysian" pessimism, or pessimism of affirmation rather than of renunciation (BT, Preface, 6; see GS, 370).

Although it took him several more years to own up to it fully, Nietzsche's great disappointment with Wagner as a thinker was precisely his endorsement of Schopenhauerian resignation, which was no more palpable, in his judgment, than in the Christian themes of Wagner's final opera, *Parcifal*.[4] From a philosophical point of view, in the final analysis, the central dispute between Wagner and Nietzsche concerns the proper response to the fundamental insight behind Schopenhauer's pessimism, which they both accept, and which I will call the *elusiveness of fulfillment.* Wagner essentially embraces Schopenhauerian resignation as the proper response, while Nietzsche advocates a tragic affirmation of life. Here I propose a broad outline of this central dispute. Wagner himself plays no substantial role in this dispute, but rather figures in it as the great creative genius of the age, the possession of whose intellect Nietzsche vainly attempted to wrest from the influence of Schopenhauer's "resignationism."

1. The Elusiveness of Fulfillment and Complete Resignation

The fundamental insight of Schopenhauerian pessimism is the *elusiveness of fulfillment.* Schopenhauer defines fulfillment as a state in which all of one's desires are satisfied once and for all, and nothing is left to be desired: "a final satisfaction of the will, after which no fresh willing would occur, . . . an imperishable satisfaction of the will," a "permanent satisfaction which completely and forever satisfies its craving," or a "contentment that cannot again be disturbed" (WWR I, 362). Since Schopenhauer defines happiness itself in terms of it, the recognition that fulfillment is bound to elude us has one deflating implication: "Everything in life proclaims that happiness on earth is destined to be frustrated or recognized as an illusion. The grounds for this lie deep in the very nature of things" (WWR II, xlvi, 573; cf. WWR I, 323).

Schopenhauer's pessimism is thus framed by two basic claims: happiness must be understood in terms of fulfillment, and the elusiveness of fulfillment is not a merely contingent matter but a necessity rooted in the "very nature of things." It is important to note that Schopenhauer's characterization of fulfillment is ambiguous: it designates, on the one hand, *complete* satisfaction, or a state in which all of our desires are satisfied, and also, on the other hand, *permanent* satisfaction, or a state of contentment that can no longer be disturbed. The two notions are quite different as one bears on the possibility of satisfying *all* of one's desires, whereas the other concerns the possibility of deriving *permanent enjoyment* from that satisfaction. We should therefore not be surprised to find in his writings independent arguments against the possibility of each of these two forms of fulfillment, which I will examine in turn.

1.1. The Impossibility of Complete Satisfaction

According to Schopenhauer's most mature view, the impossibility of complete satisfaction has its source in the fact that nothing in the world possesses *intrinsic value.* An object is intrinsically good, for Schopenhauer, when its value does not depend on the fact that it is desired, which is rather motivated by it. By contrast, an object is extrinsi-

cally good when its value depends entirely on the fact that it is desired. To this distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic goods corresponds a distinction between two types of desires. *Object-based* desires are those desires motivated by your recognition of the *intrinsic* desirability of their objects. In this case, it is because you judge the object good that you come to desire it. *Need-based* desires are motivated, instead, by a pre-existing need for a certain object. In this conception, the object's desirability is *extrinsic*, entirely determined by its capacity to meet the relevant need. Absent this need, the object loses its desirability and therefore its appeal or interest to you. Here, you judge the object good or desirable only because, and in so far as, you desire (or need) it.

At first glance, it may seem as though Schopenhauer blames the impossibility of permanent satisfaction on the lack of intrinsic goods. Thus, he claims that the satisfaction of need-based desires by the possession of extrinsic goods "cannot be lasting satisfaction and gratification, but always delivers us from a pain or want that must be followed either by a new pain, or by langor, empty longing, and boredom" (WWR I, 320). But he is in reality making here a claim about the impossibility of *complete* satisfaction. The gratification we feel at the possession of extrinsic goods "cannot be lasting satisfaction and gratification" because *other, still unsatisfied desires* soon come to torment us, or because we simply grow bored of these goods. Whether or not we have, at any moment, other desires that remain unsatisfied is arguably a contingent matter. It is after all possible that, for a moment at least, all of our determinate desires could be satisfied, so that, at these moments, it seems that we would achieve complete satisfaction. But Schopenhauer's point is that such complete satisfaction is bound to elude us because what we experience, when all of our determinate desires are satisfied, is not the fulfillment we might have expected, but "empty longing and boredom." Why is this so?

To answer this question, we must first ask what sort of state boredom is, and what sort of dissatisfaction it involves. Schopenhauer succinctly defines it as "the empty longing for a new desire" (WWR I, 260; see 164; 320; 364).[5] Although boredom is a feeling of frustration, it does not result from the frustration of some determinate desire: for it arises, on the contrary, when all determinate desires have been satisfied and no new desire "appears again on the scene" (WWR I, 314). It is rather the consequence of the frustration of the indeterminate, or "empty," desire to desire, or to be interested. You are bored, in Schopenhauer's view, when you "lack objects of willing," which does not mean that you are lacking the determinate objects of particular desires, but rather that you are lacking objects *to* desire.

This account is borne out by the distinctive phenomenology of boredom. Being bored is, as we are prone to saying, having "nothing to do," that is to say, having no desire to do anything. It is a condition in which nothing arouses our interest, or engages our will. And we *deplore* this condition precisely because we desire things to desire. This desire has no determinate object: we merely desire something to desire, but nothing in particular – any fresh determinate desire will do. Thus, boredom is the expression of an "empty longing," a desire in search of an object, a desire to desire again.

Schopenhauer ultimately blames the possibility of boredom to the lack of intrinsic goods:

> Their satisfaction is hard to attain and yet affords him nothing but a painless state in which he is still abandoned to boredom. This, then, is positive proof that, in itself, existence has

> no value; for boredom is just the feeling of its emptiness. Thus if life, in the craving for which our very essence and existence consist, had a positive value and in itself a real intrinsic worth, there could not possibly be any boredom.
>
> (PP II, 146, 287)

Consider the paradigmatic example of an extrinsic good: water to one who is thirsty. It is undeniable that drinking of water, by quenching our thirst, also makes us lose our interest in, or desire, for it. But why should it also soon leave us with a feeling of emptiness or boredom? The answer is simply this: we are left dissatisfied because in addition to our desire for the water, we also have a desire to desire, or to be interested. And this desire, which is satisfied so long as we are thirsty, is frustrated as soon as our thirst is quenched. This is because drinking water is a merely extrinsic good. In one respect, such goods are undeniably valuable: for instance, drinking water does deliver us from the pangs of thirst. But in another respect, they fall short: they fail to keep us interested.[6]

If anything in our existence had value "in itself," its possession would be a positive good, rather than merely the absence of the pain caused by the need for it. It would retain its interest to us, it would continue to inspire desire, even after we had secured possession of it, and its possession would be a source not of boredom, but of fulfillment. Since, as Schopenhauer believes, there are no intrinsically good objects (or, in any event, all human desires are need-based desires),[7] there simply are no prospects of fulfillment:

> Willing and striving are [life's] whole essence, and can be fully compared to an unquenchable thirst. The basis of all willing, however, is need, lack, and hence pain, and by its very nature and origin, it is therefore destined to pain. If, on the other hand, it lacks objects of willing, because it is at once deprived of them again by too easy a satisfaction, a fearful emptiness and boredom come over it; in other words, its being and its existence itself become an intolerable burden for it. Hence its life swings like a pendulum to and fro between pain and boredom, and these two are in fact its ultimate constituents.
>
> (WWR I, 312; cf. 196)

The following picture of human willing emerges from Schopenhauer's reflections on the susceptibility to boredom. Human beings obviously have many *first-order* desires for determinate objects (for instance, fame, wealth, love, food and shelter, and so on). And such desires are also painful so long as they are unsatisfied. But their susceptibility to boredom reveals that human beings also have a *second-order* desire, a desire whose object is (or includes) a desire. This structure of human willing in first- and second-order desires shows why a final and complete satisfaction of all desires (that is to say, fulfillment) is impossible. The satisfaction of first-order desires for determinate objects, which eliminates ordinary pain, necessarily implies the frustration of the second-order desire to have (first-order) desires, and therefore boredom, and vice-versa. Since both kinds of desires can never be satisfied together, human life "swings like a pendulum to and fro between pain and boredom." Something is always left to be desired.

1.2. The Impossibility of Permanent Satisfaction

When he denies the possibility of *permanent* satisfaction, Schopenhauer is not alluding to the fact – which we just established – that something is always left to be desired. He

is rather inviting us to imagine a condition in which we have achieved complete satisfaction, that is to say, in which all of our desires are satisfied, and asking whether it is possible to derive a permanent enjoyment (or "gratification") from that satisfaction. He argues that it is not in the following passage:

> All satisfaction, or what is commonly called happiness, is really and essentially always *negative* only, and never positive. It is not a gratification which comes to us originally [*ursprünglich*] and of itself [*von selbst*], but it must always be the satisfaction of a desire. For desire, that is to say, lack, is the precedent condition of every pleasure; but with the satisfaction, the desire and therefore the pleasure cease; . . . all happiness is only of a negative, and not positive nature, and . . . for this reason it cannot be lasting satisfaction and gratification.
>
> (WWR I, 319–20; cf. 375)

The crucial premise of this argument is the claim that pleasure (or the *feeling* of "satisfaction") is essentially *negative:* it is nothing but the experience of painlessness. And painlessness cannot only be experienced in the satisfaction or elimination of preexisting desires because Schopenhauer maintains that pain and desire imply each other.[8] If we accept this crucial premise, then the argument is straightforward and can be illuminated with a simple example. Thirst is a condition of the pleasure taken at drinking water, which consists itself of nothing more than the elimination of the discomfort caused by thirst. As soon as thirst is quenched, however, drinking no longer provides pleasure. Nevertheless, I may continue to enjoy the absence of the thirst, which tormented me a moment ago. But a moment's reflection shows that even this continued enjoyment cannot be lasting:

> What is immediately given to us is always only the want, i.e., the pain. The satisfaction and pleasure can be known only indirectly by remembering the preceding suffering and privation that ceased on their entry. . . . Thus also we are pleased at remembering need, sickness, want, and so on which have been overcome, because such remembrance is the only means of enjoying present blessings.
>
> (WWR I, 319–20)

In so far as it is the *experience* of the absence of pain, pleasure requires some sort of awareness of that pain itself as a condition of the possible experience of its absence – for example, in the form of a memory of the pain now absent. It follows that, as the memory of our sufferings eventually fades away, so does the pleasure we take at their absence. The only way in which satisfaction can be felt, then, is if it is periodically interrupted: a permanent satisfaction is a satisfaction that is eventually no longer felt. Accordingly, as Schopenhauer concedes, the most satisfying life possible is not for pain and desires to have been eliminated once and for all, but "for desire and satisfaction to follow each other at not too short and not too long intervals" (WWR I, 324).

This entire argument hinges on the claim that all pleasure is nothing but the experience of painlessness. Schopenhauer finds the most compelling evidence for this claim in the observation that there is a peculiar *asymmetry* in the experiences of pleasure and pain, which he describes in the following terms:

> We feel pain, but not painlessness; worry, but not freedom from worry; fear, but not safety and security. We feel the desire as we feel hunger and thirst; but as soon as it has been satisfied, it is like the mouthful of food which has been taken, and which ceases to exist for our feelings the moment it is swallowed. We painfully feel the loss of pleasures and enjoyments, as soon as they fail to appear, but when pains cease even after being present for a long time, their absence is not directly felt, but at most they are thought of intentionally by means of reflection. For only pain and lack can be felt positively, and therefore they proclaim themselves [*kündigen daher sich selbst an*]; well-being, on the contrary, is merely negative.
>
> (WWR II, xlvi, 575; cf. BM, 16, 146; PP II, 149, 291–92)

The phenomenological asymmetry between pleasure and pain comes down to the following: while our pains and sufferings "proclaim themselves," while our experience of them is direct or "positive," and does not require any contrast with pleasure, our pleasures are experienced only indirectly or "negatively," as the relief from, or the absence of, pain. This asymmetry is particularly evident in the fact that we frequently become aware of our pleasures only when they are gone and we feel pain again, or that we enjoy them only when we remember the torments that preceded them. Thus, while pain is the object of a "direct feeling," pleasure can only be the object of a "thought," or a "reflection." The best explanation for this asymmetry, according to Schopenhauer, is the fact that pleasure is nothing but the experience of painlessness.

This view invites predictable objections, the most serious of which consists in denying any asymmetry in the experiences of pleasure and pain by denying any relativity between them. Both can be the objects of a direct feeling, and both can be experienced "positively," independently from each other. In view of the essential connection Schopenhauer sees between pain and desire, pleasure could be a positive experience – that is to say, not just the experience of painlessness – only if it does not consist in the satisfaction of a pre-existing desire. And it certainly seems as though pleasures can come unbidden: I may, for example, delight at the sight of an unexpectedly beautiful scenery even though I had no prior desire to see a beautiful scenery. Schopenhauer deploys two strategies to answer this objection, one explicit and the other more implicit.

First, he explicitly concedes that such unbidden pleasures undeniably occur – there is a kind of "pure happiness which is not preceded either by suffering or need" (WWR I, 321), which consists of what he calls "intellectual pleasures" presumably to indicate that they do not result from the satisfaction of desires – but he continues to hold that even such pleasures are negative. Among such purely intellectual pleasures, we paradigmatically find aesthetic pleasures, such as the delight taken at a beautiful scenery I just mentioned, and although they do not result from the satisfaction of a pre-existing desire (or the removal of some precedent suffering), they consist nevertheless in the *elimination* of desire. Aesthetic contemplation is a source of pleasure not in virtue of satisfying some particular desire but in virtue of freeing the individual, if only for a moment, *from his desires in general*, and so from the agitation and torments that accompany them. Here is how Schopenhauer describes aesthetic pleasure:

> The storm of passions, the pressure of desire and fear, and all the miseries of willing are then at once calmed and appeased in a marvellous way. For at the moment when, torn from the will, we have given ourselves up to pure, will-less knowing, we have stepped into

> another world, so to speak, where everything that moves our will, and thus violently agitates us, no longer exists.
>
> (WWR I, 197)

In aesthetic contemplation, the intellect breaks free from the service of the will and in so doing delivers us, if only for a moment, from the "miseries of willing."[9]

Schopenhauer's second (and more implicit) strategy consists in arguing that, in cases in which it appears unexpectedly, the pleasure brings into view a desire of which the agent had only a dim awareness. The feeling of pleasure makes the agent aware of the presence of some desire, and it is to be explained in terms of its satisfaction. This is not simply the implausible claim that I must have had a particular desire for the very experience I now find pleasurable: as I noted earlier, it certainly appears plausible to take pleasure at some beautiful scenery even though one actually had no pre-existing particular desire for it. But it is possible to explain my pleasure by appealing to the presence in me of a broader desire for experiences *of that general type*, of which this one is an instantiation. Thus, the unexpected pleasure I take at the contemplation of beautiful scenery would not need to be explained by the fact that I had a desire to see beautiful scenery as I set out to take a walk, but it might be plausibly explained by the fact that I have a *general*, on-going desire for natural beauty.[10]

1.3. The Negation of the Will

The essential ethical task, according to Schopenhauer, is to come to terms with the elusiveness of fulfillment. What sort of prospects are there for happiness in a world in which fulfillment is bound to elude us? Schopenhauer's proposal rests on the following observation: "so long as our consciousness is filled by our will, so long as we are given up to the throng of desires with its constant hopes and fears, so long as we are the subject of willing, we never obtain lasting happiness or peace" (WWR I, 196). This passage suggests that it is only so long as we conceive of happiness in terms of the *satisfaction* of our desires that we are doomed never to achieve it. This suggests that happiness might still be achievable, albeit by a radically different path. Happiness, remember, is the condition in which we are once and for all free from pain, a "contentment which cannot again be disturbed." The passage intimates that we might achieve a lasting freedom from pain by detaching ourselves from our desires, by achieving what Schopenhauer calls the "negation of the will to live."

Schopenhauer calls the negation of the will "complete resignation" to indicate that it consists not only in renouncing the satisfaction of desires, but in renouncing these desires themselves. If I merely renounce the satisfaction of my desires, I continue to suffer from their frustration, even if I come to accept it, while if I renounce the desires themselves, I become indifferent to this frustration, which ceases to be a cause of suffering.[11] The negation of the will is in fact a renunciation of fulfillment in both its forms of *complete* and *permanent* satisfaction. Once fulfillment is thus renounced, Schopenhauer proposes, its elusiveness ceases to be a source of suffering.

This doctrine of complete resignation may well be the most distinctively Schopenhauerian doctrine, but Schopenhauer himself displays a puzzling, and little recognized, ambivalence toward it. Although it is the best condition available to human beings,

complete resignation remains for him a distant second-best to the fulfillment we had been hoping for, merely an ersatz happiness, which we may still call good only "metaphorically and figuratively":

> However, if we wish to give an honorary, or so to speak an emeritus, position to an old expression that from custom we do not like entirely to discard, we may, metaphorically and figuratively, call the complete self-effacement and denial of the will, true will-lessness, which alone stills and silences for ever the pressure of willing, which alone gives that contentment which cannot again be disturbed, . . . the absolute good, the *summum bonum*, and we may regard it as the only radical cure for the disease against which all other good things, such as all fulfilled wishes and all attained happiness, are only palliatives, anodynes.
>
> (WWR I, 362)

I might offer the following conjectures for this curious ambivalence, and the persistent hankering for fulfillment it makes manifest. For one thing, even though he initially attributes the elusiveness of fulfillment to the "inner conflict" of the human will (WWR I, 397), Schopenhauer eventually blames it on the absence of *intrinsic goods* (PP II, 146, 287). Such intrinsic goods, if they existed, would make both a complete and a permanent satisfaction possible. They would be capable of satisfying at once the first-order desire for their possession and the second-order desire to remain interested by them, and in so far as their value would exceed their capacity to satisfy pre-existing desires, their possession would be a source of permanent gratification. According to Schopenhauer's final view, then, the elusiveness of fulfillment is to be blamed on the world around us, rather than on the nature of our own will. But it is hard to see how this knowledge could induce us to renounce this will itself, rather than merely its pursuits in a world inhospitable to them: for there is nothing wrong with our will, in the final analysis, but there is something wrong with the world.[12] It is, in other words, the very possibility of complete resignation that is challenged by Schopenhauer's own final diagnosis of the elusiveness of fulfillment.

For another thing, Schopenhauer might have apprehended that "the complete self-effacement and denial of the will . . . which alone gives that contentment which cannot again be disturbed" could not really be a form of happiness at all. For he thinks of happiness as a kind of *experience*, namely the experience of permanent painlessness, and this experience is, in the terms of his own philosophical psychology, simply impossible. The experience of painlessness requires some awareness of the pain that is absent, but by guaranteeing *permanent* painlessness, complete resignation is bound eventually to dissipate the last remains of any consciousness of pain, and so to undermine the very possibility of the experience of its absence.

2. Nietzsche's "New Happiness"

Nietzsche's chief critique of Schopenhauer's ethical thought touches on both of these issues and his diagnosis of its central failing is, in a way, quite straightforward: Schopenhauer continues to assume that happiness – or more generally, the idea of a good

or meaningful life – is to be understood in terms of fulfillment. And this is precisely the respect in which Schopenhauer (and Wagner in so far as he follows Schopenhauer on this point) remains "Christian":

> As we thus reject the Christian interpretation and condemn its "meaning" like counterfeit, *Schopenhauer's* question immediately comes to us in a terrifying way: *Has existence any meaning at all?* . . . What Schopenhauer himself said in answer to this question was – forgive me – hasty, youthful, only a compromise, a way of remaining – remaining stuck – in precisely those Christian-ascetic moral perspectives in which one had *renounced faith* along with the faith in God.
>
> (GS, 357)

Nietzsche challenges nothing less than this fundamental assumption. He suggests that the existence of intrinsic goods would not make fulfillment any less elusive, and proceeds to show that the elusiveness of fulfillment, far from being incompatible with happiness properly conceived, is in fact an essential "ingredient" of it. And he argues that it is only in so far as suffering, and therefore the lack of fulfillment, is regarded as an ingredient of happiness that happiness remains possible as an experience. As I noted earlier, Nietzsche opposed Schopenhauer's (and Wagner's) "resignationism" as early as *The Birth of Tragedy* (if somewhat ambivalently). But it was to take the full development of his mature philosophy, particularly his doctrine of the will-to-power, to provide him with the full-fledged alternative conception of happiness he was seeking – what he ended up calling his "new happiness."

To understand how Nietzsche was led to the revolutionary idea of the will-to-power, it is helpful to return briefly to Schopenhauer's analysis of the experience of boredom, for this analysis is not without its shortcomings, three of which in particular deserve mention. First, boredom can occur even when you have live (unsatisfied) determinate desires. Schopenhauer himself offers an example: prisoners can grow bored, even though they have a live desire to get out of jail (WWR I, 313). It follows that boredom cannot simply be a consequence of the frustration of the desire to have things to desire. Indeed, when we are bored, we do not usually complain that we have nothing to *desire*, but rather that we have nothing to *do.* Boredom is the frustration of a desire to engage in activity, or to have things to do. The prisoner's desire to be free cannot stave off boredom precisely because there is (usually) nothing he can *do* about it. Second, boredom can occur even when you have things to do. This is typically the case when the required activities are *unchallenging*. Boredom is therefore the frustration of the desire to engage in some challenging form of activity.

These two modifications of Schopenhauer's account imply a third, even more significant one. Boredom can occur even when your activity results in securing the possession of *intrinsic goods*. It is possible to tire of intellectual or creative achievements, for example, even when you take the value of these achievements to be independent of your pre-existing needs and desires. This is because the desire that lies at the source of boredom is not simply the desire to be interested, it is the desire to be engaged in a certain challenging form of *activity*. And even intrinsic goods, once their possession is firmly secured, might lose their appeal by ceasing to motivate engagement in that sort of activity.

Nietzsche's famous concept of *the will-to-power*, I now want to argue, designates a desire to engage in a challenging form of activity. This interpretation differs in significant respects from the still widespread view that power should be understood in terms of *control* or *domination*. This interpretation of power in terms of domination and control is widespread because some of Nietzsche's own formulations invite it, such as the following:

> Life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation – but why should one always use those words in which a slanderous intent has been imprinted for ages? . . . "Exploitation" does not belong to a corrupt or imperfect or primitive society: it belongs to the *essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life.
>
> (BGE, 259)

However, a close reading of even this provocative passage already suggests that this interpretation is not inevitable: it presents domination and control, in their various forms of "appropriation," "overpowering," "exploitation" and the like, as a common, perhaps unavoidable, "consequence" of the pursuit of power, but not necessarily as what this pursuit *consists of*. A proper appreciation of this fact points, in my view, to a very different, and far more interesting, conception of the nature of the will-to-power.

All the activities Nietzsche associates with the will-to-power in the passage above have a common core, which he describes elsewhere in the following terms:

> But all expansion, incorporation, growth is striving against something that resists [*ein Anstreben gegen Widerstehendes*]; movement is essentially tied up with states of displeasure; that which is here the driving force must in any event desire something else [than happiness] if it desires displeasure in this way and continually looks for it.
>
> (WP, 704)

The pursuit of power ("expansion, incorporation, growth"), he declares, is "striving against something that resists." Since striving against is an effort to overcome, we might say that the will-to-power aims at the overcoming of resistance. It is "a desire to overcome, a desire to throw down, a desire to become master, a thirst for enemies and resistances and triumphs" (GM, I 13).

It is this emphasis on the overcoming of resistance that the traditional interpretation in terms of domination and control cannot accommodate. Note first that the pursuit of the desire to dominate does not, in fact, *necessitate* the overcoming of resistance, even when domination is of other people. As Nietzsche observes, many people actually wish to be dominated and would oppose no resistance to those who seek to subjugate them (see, e.g., BGE, 261; GS, 363; A, 54). Moreover, even if the desire to dominate and control were to necessitate it, the overcoming of resistance would play only a purely instrumental role, so that if domination and control could be achieved without overcoming resistance, this desire would be no less satisfied. But Nietzsche explicitly and insistently maintains that the will-to-power "is never satisfied unless it has opponents and resistance [*ohne den Gegner und Widerstand noch nicht satt genug ist*]" (WP, 696;

cf. 656; A, 2). It essentially involves, in other words, "a *thirst* for enemies and resistances."

In Nietzsche's view, then, the will-to-power designates not merely a desire for the satisfaction of which overcoming resistance is a perhaps necessary means, but a desire for the overcoming of resistance itself. In the first case, which is the view of power as domination or control, pursuing power requires being prepared to overcome whatever resistance presents itself, but certainly not deliberately seeking it out. In the second case, which is Nietzsche's considered view, pursuing power requires actually and deliberately seeking resistance to overcome. Thus, power for Nietzsche is not synonymous with domination or control.[13]

The explicit contrast between power and happiness in the passage mentioned earlier (WP, 704) suggests one further important qualification. In the conception under which Nietzsche disparages it, happiness is understood in terms of the satisfaction of all of your desires. If we keep in mind that happiness so conceived requires that all resistance to that satisfaction has been overcome, then in contrasting power with it, Nietzsche indicates that the will-to-power is not a will to a *state in which resistance has been overcome*. Since the will-to-power is not simply a will to *resistance* either, we must conclude that the will-to-power is a will to the very *activity of overcoming resistance*.

We may now turn to the most perplexing claim Nietzsche makes about the will-to-power: whoever wills power thereby "desires displeasure and continually looks for it" (WP, 704). The will-to-power is a desire for the overcoming of resistance. Considered in isolation, this desire lacks *determinate content*. It gets a determinate content only from its relation to some *other* (determinate) desire. Something constitutes a resistance only in relation to a determinate end one desires to realize. For example, a recalcitrant problem is an obstacle to the desire to understand. Accordingly, the will-to-power cannot be satisfied unless the agent has a desire for something else than power. The will-to-power therefore has the structure of a *second-order desire* – specifically, a desire for the overcoming of resistance in the pursuit of some determinate first-order desire.

Nietzsche also accepts from Schopenhauer the idea that all pain or suffering results from frustration, from resistance to the satisfaction of some desire (WWR I, 309; 363; PP II, 149, 291). But, unlike Schopenhauer, Nietzsche is not a hedonist:

> Human beings do not seek pleasure and avoid displeasure. . . . What human beings want . . . is an increase of power; driven by that will they seek resistance, they need something that opposes it [*aus jenem Willen heraus sucht er nach Widerstand, braucht er Etwas, das sich entgegenstellt*] – Displeasure, as an obstacle to their will to power, is therefore a normal fact . . . ; human beings do not avoid it, they are rather in continual need of it . . .
>
> (WP, 702; cf. 656; Z, II 12)

The will-to-power, in so far as it is a desire for the overcoming of resistance, must necessarily also include a desire for the resistance to overcome. Since suffering is the experience of such resistance, then he who desires power ipso facto "desires displeasure." The will-to-power is a will for the overcoming of resistance. Since resistance is always defined in relation to determinate ends, the desire for resistance to overcome cannot be satisfied unless you also desire these determinate ends. Yet, in willing power, you must also desire resistance to their realization. And so, in willing power, you must want *both*

certain determinate ends *and* resistance to their realization: "That I must be struggle and a becoming and *an end and an opposition to ends* – ah, whoever guesses what is my will should also guess on what *crooked* paths it must proceed" (Z, II 12; first emphasis mine).

The concept of will-to-power casts the elusiveness of fulfillment in a radically new light once we consider yet a further crucial characteristic of it, which is an essential consequence of its very structure. The will-to-power will not be satisfied unless three conditions are met: there must be some first-order desire for a determinate end, there must be resistance to the realization of this determinate end, *and* there must be actual success in overcoming this resistance. But overcoming resistance eliminates it, and in so doing it also eliminates a necessary condition of satisfaction of the will-to-power. It follows that the satisfaction of the will-to-power necessarily brings about its own dissatisfaction. I will call this the paradox of the will-to-power.

The Greek *agon* (contest or competition) (KSA, I, 783–92; cf. TI, II 8; IX 23) is one of Nietzsche's favorite illustrations of the pursuit of power. He favors it because it helps to bring out the paradox of the will-to-power. The will-to-power of the protagonists of a competitive game is expressed in their desire to play. But they are not really playing unless they care about winning and do everything they can to achieve victory. This simply follows from the fact that their motivation for playing the game is the will-to-power, namely, a desire for the *overcoming* of resistance: if they were to lose, their will to *power* would be frustrated, since they would have failed to overcome resistance. But in achieving victory they also bring the game to an end, frustrating thereby their desire to play: "Alas, who was not vanquished in his victory?" (Z, III 12[30]).

What is the implication of this paradox for the pursuit of power? Nietzsche describes it in the following terms: "Whatever I create and however much I love it – soon I must oppose it and my love; thus my will wills it" (Z, II 12). Willing power does not, strictly speaking, require us to destroy what we have created, or hate what we love. Rather, we must "overcome" what we love or create. Our will-to-power soon induces us to find any attained object of a determinate desire no longer satisfying, no longer enough. But we cannot simply undo what we have done and do it again: since the resistance to doing it has been overcome already, it could no longer count as genuine overcoming. What we need are fresh, new, perhaps greater challenges, which explains why Nietzsche describes the pursuit of power as a process of "growth" (e.g., WP, 125), or "self-overcoming" (Z, II 12).

In claiming that the satisfaction of the will-to-power brings about its dissatisfaction, then, Nietzsche is not saying that its pursuit is self-defeating or self-undermining. It is plainly possible to satisfy the will-to-power – you only have to engage in the successful overcoming of resistance. The paradox of the will-to-power simply reveals one of its most distinctive features, namely that it is a kind of desire the satisfaction of which cannot provide *fulfillment*. In so far as it is satisfied by the on-going activity of overcoming resistance to the satisfaction of some particular desire, then it presupposes the frustration of this particular desire, until that resistance is finally overcome and this particular desire satisfied, at which point it is the desire to have resistance to overcome that is frustrated.

It is therefore the paradoxical nature of the will-to-power that accounts for the elusiveness of fulfillment. If you will power, the actual satisfaction of any determinate

desire, or the achievement of any determinate goal, is bound to leave you with a palpable sense of dissatisfaction. But the cause of this dissatisfaction is not the fact that the object of your desire is defective, for example by virtue of lacking intrinsic value. Such a goal, once achieved, remains unsatisfying because its achievement spells the end of a particular bout of active confrontation and overcoming of resistance. And since the will-to-power is precisely the desire to be engaged in that sort of activity, you must, in order to pursue it, learn to "oppose" even the things you "love," and take "joy in destruction of *the most noble* and at the sight of its progressive ruin: in reality joy in what is coming and lies in the future, which triumphs over existing things, *however good*" (WP 417; my emphases). As this passage makes clear, it is not the lack of intrinsic value of your achievement that causes you dissatisfaction: on the contrary, your will-to-power could, and indeed does, induce you to take leave of those achievements you consider intrinsically good.

For Nietzsche, power is not simply the object of a peculiar desire, it is also a good, indeed the core of his new conception of happiness: "What is happiness? – The feeling that power *increases* – that a resistance is overcome [*dass ein Widerstand überwunden wird*]. *Not* contentment, but more power; *not* peace at all, but war; *not* virtue but proficiency" (A, 2). And if we want to know what sort of good power is, Nietzsche offers a crucial hint in the following passage:

> A tablet of the good hangs over every people. Behold, it is the tablet of their overcomings; behold, it is the voice of their will to power. Praiseworthy is whatever seems difficult to a people; whatever seems indispensable and difficult is called good; and whatever liberates even out of the deepest need, the rarest, the most difficult – that they call holy.
>
> (Z, I 15)

Nietzsche observes here that we take the *difficulty* of an achievement to contribute to its value. And he claims that this is the implication of a commitment to the value of power, understood as the overcoming of resistance. At its core, an ethics whose principle is the will-to-power is intended to reflect the value we place on what is difficult or, as we might prefer to say, on what is *challenging*. The claim that difficulty contributes to the value of an achievement would require careful analysis, but I only want to indicate here an important implication Nietzsche takes this claim to have for our understanding of happiness.

Valuing the pursuit of power is valuing a specific type of activity, that of confronting and overcoming resistance. Remember that the will-to-power has a deeply paradoxical structure, with the consequence that its satisfaction brings about its own dissatisfaction. To satisfy your desire for the activity of overcoming resistance in the pursuit of some determinate end, you must achieve that determinate end, that is to say, overcome all the resistance to its realization. But once that resistance is overcome, the activity comes to a close, and your desire for this sort of activity finds itself frustrated, inducing you to seek out new opportunities for it.

It is therefore no surprise that his valuation of the will-to-power leads Nietzsche to claim to have discovered a "new happiness" (GS, Preface 3; cf. A, 1). Happiness is often conceived in terms of *fulfillment:* the complete satisfaction of all of your desires, the state in which nothing is left to be desired – "the happiness of resting, of not being

disturbed, of satiety, of finally attained unity, as a 'sabbath of sabbaths'" (BGE, 200). This characterization evokes both the idea of *complete* satisfaction ("the happiness of . . . satiety, of finally attained unity") and the idea of *permanent* satisfaction ("the happiness of resting, of not being disturbed"). In contrast, Nietzsche's "new happiness," in so far as it involves the successful pursuit of the will-to-power, cannot be *fulfillment.* Far from being incompatible with happiness, on the contrary, the elusiveness of fulfillment proves to be its most distinctive characteristic. Thus, what Nietzsche presents as the chief "reward" of his own lifetime of inquiry is the confrontation of "an as yet undiscovered country whose boundaries nobody has yet surveyed," so full of new questions, enigmas and challenges that fulfillment appears in it forever elusive: "ah, now nothing will fulfill us anymore!" (GS, 382).

It is first as complete satisfaction that fulfillment is elusive in Nietzsche's "new happiness." In so far as it essentially involves the successful pursuit of the will-to-power, happiness cannot be *complete* satisfaction, since the distinguishing mark of the will-to-power is that it is a desire whose very satisfaction brings about its dissatisfaction.[14] This happiness cannot consist of *permanent* satisfaction either. For to satisfy the desire for the activity of overcoming resistance in the pursuit of some determinate end, one must be moved to achieve that determinate end, that is to say, to eliminate all resistance to its realization. But once that resistance is eliminated, the activity comes to a close, and the desire for this sort of activity finds itself frustrated. The will-to-power, in other words, is a desire that does not allow for *permanent* satisfaction, so that those who are committed to its pursuit must become "advocates and justifiers of all impermanence" (Z, II 2).

Nietzsche objects to Schopenhauer's complete resignation on the ground that it is not a source of happiness at all. Instead of seeking happiness in the overcoming of suffering, Schopenhauer proposes to seek it in the mere "*absence of suffering*" (GM, III 17). Since suffering consists of the frustration of desires, the only way to avoid suffering for those unable to overcome it is the complete renunciation of desires. And since the vicissitudes of desires are at the root of all feeling or affect, Schopenhauer's "resignation" ends up managing to eliminate painful feelings only by eliminating all feelings – its only pleasure is the pleasure of "falling asleep" (WP, 703): "This dominating sense of displeasure is combatted, *first*, by means that reduce the feeling of life in general to its lowest point. If possible, will and desire are abolished altogether; all that produces affect and 'blood' is avoided" (GM, III 17). There is more than a little irony in Nietzsche's claim that pleasure could be found in the unconsciousness of "sleep," in the complete absence of feeling: what else, indeed, could pleasure be but a conscious feeling?

Nietzsche finds the grounds for this objection in the very terms of Schopenhauer's philosophical psychology. According to Schopenhauerian psychology, happiness lies in the experience of painlessness, which is itself made possible by some awareness of the pain now absent (see WWR I, 319–20). By altogether abolishing "will and desire," complete resignation ends up making any such awareness of pain impossible. All that is left is affective torpor, the absence of feeling, a condition akin to "sleep." By spelling the end of all conscious affectivity, complete resignation very much begins to look like a condition in which the difference between being alive and being dead becomes vanishingly small (see WWR I, 382),[15] a state Nietzsche takes to be best described, in the final analysis, as "nothingness" (GM, III 17).

But if the very idea of permanent bliss proves ultimately to be nonsense – "'Eternal bliss': psychological nonsense" (WP, 579) – it is not just because it is impossible in the terms of Schopenhauer's own conception of happiness, but also, and primarily, because it appeals to a misguided view of happiness. If happiness lies in the activity of overcoming resistance, then it not only involves suffering as an essential "ingredient," but it is also neither a state, nor a permanent state, but at best a "becoming," a succession of finite moments, for the successful pursuit of the will-to-power implies that the resistance is eventually completely overcome, and when it is, happiness can no longer be taken in the activity of overcoming it.[16] The Christian view, which Schopenhauer endorses and finds essentially similar to certain forms of Buddhism, and to which his writings awakened Wagner, is that "happiness can be guaranteed only by being; change and happiness exclude one another" (WP, 585; cf. TI, IV 1). For Nietzsche, by contrast – and the contrast could not be starker – happiness is not to be found in being, but in becoming.

See also 6 Schopenhauer's Philosophy of the Dark Origin; 11 Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Music; 15 Schopenhauer and the Objectivity of Art; 18 Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy; 19 Life-Denial versus Life-Affirmation: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Pessimism and Asceticism.

Notes

1 See, in particular, Magee (2000).

2 Such as *The Art-Work of the Future.* See Wagner (1983, 509).

3 Nietzsche is actually quite explicit on this point: "The benefit Schopenhauer conferred on Wagner is immeasurable. Only the *philosopher of decadence* gave to the artist of decadence – *himself*" (CW, 5). He emphasizes the transformative influence of Schopenhauer on the new conclusion Wagner considered for *The Ring* (CW, 5), and also notes that the concern with Schopenhauerian "redemption [*Erlösung*]" runs deep in Wagner's creative mind: "his opera is the opera of redemption" (CW, 3).

4 Magee (2000, 320) points out that Nietzsche's criticism of Wagner is an essentially *philosophical* criticism, which has no value as *art* criticism: "Nietzsche rejects the pre-adopted Schopenhauerian attitudes and values with which Wagner's maturest works are saturated, and on that basis attacks them with the same animosity as he attacks the philosophy of Schopenhauer – for the same reasons and with the same arguments. It is rather like a militant atheist of a music critic mounting an onslaught on Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion* on the ground that it is saturated through and through with loathsome religious nonsense, and is for that reason a hateful work." For Nietzsche's attacks on Wagner's Schopenhauerianism, see, e.g., CW, 3–4, GS, 370.

5 Reginster (2006, 120–23), provides a detailed account of Schopenhauer's analysis of boredom.

6 For more on the relation between boredom and intrinsic goods, see Reginster (2007).

7 This appears to be the implications of statements like the following: "[Every man] would then first know a thing to be *good*, and in consequence will it, instead of first *willing* it, and in consequence calling it *good.* According to the whole of my fundamental view, all this is a reversal of the true relation" (WWR I, 292; cf. 360).

8 See Reginster (2006) and Reginster (2007) for an examination of various arguments that Schopenhauer offers for this view.

9 Guyer (1996) argues that Schopenhauer acknowledges, besides this purely negative aesthetic pleasure, the existence of a positive pleasure taken at cognition as such. The chief evidence for this view is the following passage: "But yet the source of aesthetic enjoyment will lie sometimes rather in the apprehension of the known Idea, sometimes rather in the bliss and peace of mind of pure knowledge free from all willing, and thus from all individuality and the pain that results therefrom" (WWR I, 212). Guyer finds in this pleasure in cognition the legacy of eighteenth-century cognitivism in aesthetic theory, a prominent manifestation of which may be found in the Kantian view that aesthetic pleasure arises out of the "free play" of our cognitive faculties, particularly the imagination. Unlike Kant, Schopenhauer makes no allusion to such free play and appears to derive aesthetic pleasure instead from the "apprehension of the known Idea" itself. Even though one cannot deny that Schopenhauer asserts the existence of such a positive pleasure, it is quite difficult to reconcile this assertion with the bulk of his other views. We should first ask what, in the "apprehension of the known Idea," is a source of pleasure. According to one possible reading, it is the "known Idea" itself, or the content of cognition, that gives pleasure. But this simply does not jibe with Schopenhauer's view that the Ideas, particularly in the highest forms of art (e.g., tragedy), are presentations of "the terrible side of life" and so are unlikely to arouse pleasure. According to another possible reading, the apprehension of the Ideas is pleasurable by virtue of involving the optimal functioning of our cognitive faculties. The problem with this proposal is that it relies on a broadly Aristotelian functionalist conception of pleasure, which Schopenhauer neither endorses nor even mentions, and which moreover represents an alternative incompatible with the essentially negative conception of pleasure that forms the basis of his pessimism, and of his ethical thought in general.

10 For further details, see Reginster (2005). It is worth noting that similarly negative conceptions of pleasure are endorsed by thinkers as eminent as Plato in the *Philebus* (31b–35c), and Freud (see, e.g., 1975).

11 I will leave aside some complicated issues regarding Schopenhauer's doctrine of complete resignation. For instance, there is the issue of whether resignation can be brought about by "voluntary suffering," or is actually induced by the sheer recognition of the inescapability of suffering.

12 I discuss this issue in greater detail in Reginster (2006, 170–75).

13 Failure to make sense of this deliberate quest for resistance is the central shortcoming of all interpretations of power in terms of control or domination, including in particular the most sophisticated among these interpretations found in Richardson (1996). It is also a shortcoming of the interpretation of power as capacity, rather than domination, presented in Clark (1990), which also arguably takes a consequence of the pursuit of power to be what this pursuit consists of.

14 The idea that the confrontation of resistance, and therefore suffering, is an essential constituent of happiness lies at the heart of Nietzsche's critique of Christian ethics. It underlies, for example, his disparagement of the Christian myth of the Garden of Eden: "God created man happy, idle, innocent, and immortal: our actual life is a false, decayed, sinful existence, an existence of punishment – Suffering, struggle, work, death are considered as objections and question marks against life, as something that ought not to last; for which one requires a cure – and *has* a cure! – From the time of Adam until now, man has been in an abnormal state . . . The *true* life is only a faith (i.e., a self-deception, a madness). The whole of struggling, battling, actual existence, full of splendor and darkness, only a bad, false existence: the task is to be redeemed from it. 'Man innocent, idle, immortal, happy' – this conception of 'supreme desiderata' must be criticized above all" (WP, 224).

15 Thus, Schopenhauer cites approvingly the mystic Madame Guyon's description of that state of complete resignation: "Everything is indifferent to me; I *cannot* will anymore; often *I do not know whether I exist or not*" (WWR I, 391; second emphasis mine).

16 Nietzsche's new conception of happiness is often taken to be in direct opposition to a hedonistic view of it. See, for example, Soll (1994), Richardson (1996) and Reginster (2006). But it appears that Nietzsche's objection to hedonism is not so much that it overestimates the importance of pleasure and pain in the explanation and justification of actions as that it misunderstands their nature. Nietzsche sometimes argues that pleasure should be conceived "as a feeling of power (presupposing displeasure)" (WP, 657; see 428, 434, 660, 688, 693, 695–96, 1023; GM, II 5–6), and that the chief mistake of traditional hedonism (including Schopenhauer's) consequently lies in its hasty acceptance of the commonsense view that pleasure and pain are "opposites." In the new conception he proposes, on the contrary, "pleasure and pain are not opposites" (WP, 699; see 660, 696), and pain is in fact "an ingredient of pleasure" (WP, 699; see WP, 658, 694, 1060). And when it is understood as the feeling of power, the view that pleasure is the good is no longer objectionable for Nietzsche (see A, 2), whereas, by contrast, the idea that the good could be understood in terms of pleasure and the avoidance of pain is simply nonsense (GS, 12; WP, 702–703). I examine this idea in detail in Reginster (2005).

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24

Schopenhauer's Influence on Wittgenstein

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I

Theodore Redpath remembers that Wittgenstein once said of Schopenhauer: "Well, he *was* a philosopher," and when asked what he meant by a "philosopher," he replied: "A teacher of manners" (Redpath 1990, 41). As such he clearly influenced Wittgenstein's early thinking about ethics and the meaning of life. His 1916 notebook (NB 71–91) and the final pages of the *Tractatus* contain a number of echoes of Schopenhauer. Like him he describes aesthetic contemplation using Spinoza's expression "sub specie aeterni[tatis]"; he repeats Schopenhauer's criticism of the categorical imperative: that every imperative calls forth the question "And what if I do not do it?" (TLP 6.422); he also agrees with Schopenhauer (and Kant) that the good action should not be motivated by its consequences (TLP 6.422); like Schopenhauer he thinks that science cannot answer questions of value; like him he places "the solution of the riddle of life" outside space and time (TLP 6.4312), and like him he thinks that "what is higher" cannot ultimately be expressed in words (TLP 6.432, 6.522).

In those early thoughts Schopenhauer's influence on Wittgenstein is obvious[2] – but of very limited philosophical interest. The fact is that the young Wittgenstein's musings and gnomic aphorisms on the meaning of life and the mystical, although extremely significant from a biographical point of view, are of little philosophical value and only tenuously related to his work on logic and language (cf. Schroeder 2006, 29f.). As a soldier on the Eastern Front, enduring physical hardship, a loss of freedom and privacy, insufferable company, and a constant threat of death, he was trying to take stock and groping for a world-view that would allow him to come to terms with his situation. Unsurprisingly the result was eclectic, extremely sketchy and in many points half-baked.[3] (In a diary entry from 1930, Wittgenstein judges that beside good and authentic things the *Tractatus* also contains some "*Kitsch*" (D 30). One may suspect that some of the purple passages from the end of the book belonged to what he had in mind.)

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Responding to his situation in 1916, Wittgenstein was trying to formulate a conception of the good and happy life that was doubly independent of the world of facts: it would not change the facts and it would also not be affected by adverse circumstances. It would be happy come what may. The ideal Wittgenstein developed at the front was that of stoic equanimity and content. Apart from a firm religious faith, which Wittgenstein felt unable to obtain, stoicism appeared to be the only ethical view that would provide an answer to his miserable situation. Stoic ethics emphasizes the distinction between what depends on us and what does not, and counsels us not to count on the latter at all. That way we will never suffer from having our desires thwarted. In the same spirit Wittgenstein notes:

> I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless.
> I can only make myself independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings.
>
> (NB 73: 11. 6. 16; cf. TLP 6.373)

The stoic attains a serene happiness by ceasing to worry about what might happen to him. He is no longer concerned about future events; in particular not about his own death: he "lives not in time but in the present," and "for life in the present there is no death" (NB 75: 8.7. 16; cf. TLP 6.4311). – This last thought is reminiscent of Marcus Aurelius' remark that we possess only the present moment, and therefore the length of our life is entirely irrelevant (*Meditations*, Book 2, § 12). Wittgenstein's acquaintance with stoic ethics may well have been derived from Schopenhauer's account of it in § 16 of *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I, and as already mentioned, he threw in ideas he remembered from Schopenhauer's own system wherever they seemed to fit, together with what had impressed him in Otto Weininger,[4] Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Karl Kraus and others. His allusions to Schopenhauer are all fairly vague and of a kind one can make from memory even years after one has read him. There is no evidence that he reread him in 1916.[5]

II

Of much greater philosophical interest than Wittgenstein's early remarks on ethics are his thoughts on idealism. According to Elizabeth Anscombe, Wittgenstein had read Schopenhauer as a boy of 16 "and had been greatly impressed by Schopenhauer's theory of the 'world as idea' (though not of the 'world as will'); Schopenhauer then struck him as fundamentally right, if only a few adjustments and clarifications were made" (Anscombe 1959, 11f.).[6] Wittgenstein's enchantment with idealism continued for quite a while: it is very strong in the *Tractatus* period, and there are still traces of it in his writings of the early 30s.[7]

Idealism identifies the world with our experiences of the world, our mental representation (*Vorstellung*) of it. This is the first sentence of Schopenhauer's main work: "The world is my representation" (WWR I, 3), repeated by Wittgenstein in his notebook on October 17, 1916 (NB 85). In the *Tractatus*, he uses the word "life" to denote a person's experience of the world, which is then identified with the world: "The world and life are one" (TLP 5.621). It follows from this identification that without an experiencing subject

there can be no world: "[the subject] is accordingly the supporter of the world, the universal condition of all that appears, of all objects, and it is always presupposed; for whatever exists, exists only for the subject" (WWR I, 5). The young Wittgenstein agrees: "the subject is . . . a presupposition of [the world's] existence" (NB 79: 2.8.16). But conceiving of the subject as the "supporter of the world" means: distinguishing it from the world: placing it in opposition to and outside the world. Schopenhauer makes this point epistemically by introducing the subject as in principle unknowable: "that which knows all things and is known by none" (WWR I, 5).[8] It is comparable to the eye which cannot see itself (WWR II, 491). Wittgenstein repeats this simile in the *Tractatus* (TLP 5.633) and combines it with the spatial image of the subject being outside the world of experience (as the eye is outside the visual field) (TLP 5.632). If I wrote a book called *The World as I Found It*, the subject could not be mentioned in it (TLP 5.631). Although we know *a priori* that we have a subject – it is a logical truth that without a subject there could not be any experience – that subject cannot be encountered in experience. It is not an object (NB 80: 7.8.16) that could stand in a possessive relation to its experiences. Therefore, the subject must be identified with its experiences: I *am* my world (TLP 5.63). Alternatively, the subject could be regarded as an outer boundary of the world (TLP 5.632). Wittgenstein's positive characterization of the "metaphysical subject" vacillates between these two metaphors for what is strictly speaking unsayable. What matters, however, is the negative point that the subject does not belong to the world (TLP 5.632). Why not? First, it appears that the real subject of experience cannot be one's physical body or a part of it (AL 23). The argument (not explicit in the *Tractatus*, but spelt out in later writings) is this. The fact that my perceptions and thoughts are lodged in this particular body is merely contingent. Tomorrow I could find myself looking at the world from a different body while still being myself. Hence my self is not identical with my body. To put the same point in a slightly different way, if "I" meant "this body that has such-and-such characteristics," I might be mistaken in claiming that, say, I am in pain. Perhaps my body no longer has any of those characteristics. But, surely, I cannot be wrong in thinking that *I* am in pain. So by "I" I must mean something that is quite independent of any of my bodily features (cf. BB 66f.). Then, having distinguished the self from one's body, one is inclined to look for it in one's mind or consciousness. But, as Hume was the first to discover, introspection, close attention to one's feelings and perceptions fails to reveal anything one might call the self. As Wittgenstein puts it:

> The experience of feeling pain is not that a person 'I' has something.
> I distinguish an intensity, a location, etc. in the pain, but not an owner.
>
> (PR § 65: 94)

So, nowhere in the world, neither in the physical nor in the mental realm, do I encounter a subject (TLP 5.633). In fact, it is not just an empirical datum that the subject is not to be found in the world, it could not be otherwise. For that all experience must depend on a subject is an *a priori* truth. But an *a priori* truth can (as such) never be learnt from experience. For "no part of our experience is at the same time *a priori*. Whatever we see could be other than it is" (TLP 5.634). In order to see that my experience was had by a subject it would have to be possible likewise to see that it was *not* had by a subject; yet that is impossible.

So far, the young Wittgenstein's idealism and his conception of the metaphysical, or "representing" (*vorstellende*) subject (TLP 5.631) are clearly Schopenhauerian, complemented only by some independent support to Schopenhauer's idea that the subject must be distinguished from my empirical person. But now the stories are continued differently: Schopenhauer gives his idealism a transcendental twist, which is not adopted by the author of the *Tractatus*, who instead takes a further step which Schopenhauer was very anxious to avoid: the step from idealism to solipsism.

Transcendental idealism is based on the distinction between things as they are in themselves and as they appear to us. In itself the world exists independently of us, but the way it appears to us is determined by our cognitive faculties. Notably that all objects are experienced in space and time and according to causal laws is not due to their independent nature, but imposed on the world by the perceiving subject. This doctrine, originating with Kant and adopted by Schopenhauer, is absent from the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein's most explicit solipsist pronouncements contradict the independence that transcendental idealism accords to the world in itself. For instance: "My world is the first and only one" (NB 82: 2.9.16); "at death the world does not alter, but comes to an end" (TLP 6.431). And although it has occasionally been suggested that logic, in the *Tractatus*, has the transcendental status that space, time and causality have in Kant and Schopenhauer, that is not so. In the relation between logic and the world it is not logic, but the world that wears the trousers. Logic is not said to *shape* the world, but merely to *pervade* it (TLP 5.61a), which suggests that the world has a certain extension independently of logic. Again, Wittgenstein does not say "the limits of logic are (i.e., determine) the limits of the world," but he puts it the other way round: "the limits of the world are also its [i.e., logic's] limits." Furthermore, the limits of language are not said to *be* the limits of my world, but to *mean* or *indicate* it (*bedeuten*) (TLP 5.6; 5.62c). Logic and language *reflect* the form of the world, they do not produce it (cf. TLP 5.511 and 6.13, where logic is said to mirror the world). Anyway, Wittgenstein nowhere entertains the idea that logic might be subjective in a transcendental sense: imposed upon the world by us.

The very word "solipsism" in the *Tractatus* already suggests that this part of Wittgenstein's early philosophy was not derived from Schopenhauer, who never uses this term, but speaks of "theoretical egoism" instead.[9] Schopenhauer writes:

> *theoretical egoism* . . . regards as phantoms all phenomena outside its own individual, just as practical egoism does in a practical respect . . . Theoretical egoism, of course, can never be refuted by proofs, yet in philosophy it has never been positively used otherwise than as a sceptical sophism, i.e., for show [*zum Schein*]. As a serious conviction, on the other hand, it could be found only in a madhouse; as such it would then need not so much a refutation as a cure. Therefore we do not go into it any further, but regard it as the last stronghold of scepticism, which is always polemical.
>
> (WWR I, 104; trans. slightly altered)

Wittgenstein's attitude towards solipsism is strikingly different. The earliest evidence of his occupation with it is a diary entry of December 8, 1914, where Wittgenstein expresses some sympathy for Nietzsche's hostility towards the Christian religion:

> Certainly, Christianity is the only *sure* way to happiness. But what if someone spurned that happiness?! Might it not be better to perish, unhappy, in a hopeless struggle against the

> outer world? But such a life is meaningless. But why not lead a meaningless life? Is it without dignity? How can it be reconciled with the strictly solipsistic point of view?
>
> (MS 102, 41)

Here "the strictly solipsistic point of view" – far from being dismissed as madness – is treated as a standard by which to gauge an ethical position. This is almost certainly a reference to Weininger's moral solipsism, which Wittgenstein had encountered about that time.[10] In Weininger's ethics, developed from Kantian ideas, all heteronomy is rejected: I am responsible neither to God nor to anybody else, only to my own self as the source of the moral law. "*Truth, purity, faithfulness, sincerity towards oneself*: that is the only conceivable ethics. . . . Duty exists only towards oneself" (Weininger 1903, 206 and 208). As a moral agent "man is alone in the universe in eternal, immense loneliness" (Weininger 1903, 210). Ethics requires that one become aware of one's utter loneliness. Hence, a "refutation of solipsism would be altogether incompatible with ethics" (Weininger 1904, 147): "Shrinking back from solipsism is being incapable of giving independent value to life, incapable of a rich loneliness, needing to hide in the crowd, to *vanish* in a great number, *to go under*. It is cowardly" (Weininger 1904, 148). This, to be sure, is not the metaphysical solipsism propounded in the *Tractatus*. However, being persuaded by Weininger of a solipsistic outlook in ethics,[11] Wittgenstein was probably more readily prepared to embrace a form of metaphysical solipsism too. Unlike Schopenhauer, he would certainly not dismiss it as madness.

In fact, Schopenhauer's distaste for solipsism was shared by many readers of the *Tractatus* who refused to believe that Wittgenstein really held such an absurd doctrine. They read him as saying merely that solipsism is in some ways tempting, but ultimately mistaken (Black 1964, 309; Pears 1987, 188); so that in this respect Wittgenstein did not disagree with Schopenhauer after all (Magee 1983, 313; Janaway 1989, 324ff.; Weiner 1992). But that is not a plausible interpretation. For one thing, it is flatly contradicted by TLP 5.62, where solipsism is implicitly called "a truth," and explicitly described as something that is "entirely correct" and "shows itself." Moreover, Wittgenstein declares that "at death the world does not alter, but comes to an end" (TLP 6.431), whereas a non-solipsistic idealist would say that it continues to exist in other people's minds.[12] For another thing, the fact that by *Tractatus* standards any formulation of the doctrine must indeed be dismissed as "nonsense" does not, for Wittgenstein, preclude the doctrine from being true – as according to its author the whole of the *Tractatus* is in the same situation: its sentences are nonsense (TLP 6.54), yet the truth of the thoughts they express is "unassailable and definitive" (TLP, *Preface*: h). That is because the author of the *Tractatus* advocated an extremely restrictive criterion of sense according to which only contingent, empirical, propositions are meaningful, not the necessary truths of logic or philosophy.[13]

Further, Wittgenstein's writings and lectures between 1929 and 1935 provide abundant evidence of how compelling solipsism had seemed to him and how difficult he found it to free himself from its grip. Still in December 1929 he regarded solipsism as an unsayable truth:

> That statement, that only the present experience is real, seems to contain the last consequence of solipsism. And in one sense it is indeed so; but it [the statement] can say as little

> as solipsism [*nur kann er ebensowenig sagen, wie der Solipsismus*]. – For what belongs to the essence of the world just cannot be *said*.
>
> (MS 108, 2)

> Only what we can imagine to be different, language can say.
>
> (MS 108, 1)

In the following years Wittgenstein became more critical, and soon regarded both idealism and solipsism as philosophical errors (e.g., AL 29; BT 508). But they were by no means trivial errors. The tenacity with which he repeatedly discussed them over many years shows clearly that overcoming his solipsistic inclinations was for him a formidable philosophical challenge. Anticipating the famous image of the *Philosophical Investigations* that solving a philosophical problem is like showing a fly the way out of a fly-bottle (PI § 309), he writes about 1935: "The solipsist flutters and flutters in the fly-bottle, strikes against the walls, flutters further. How can he be brought to rest?" (NfL 258).

Let us now consider how Wittgenstein got from idealism to solipsism. *Why* did he think that "what the solipsist means is entirely correct" (*ganz richtig*)? According to TLP 5.62, "the key" to the issue of solipsism is the remark 5.6:[14] "*The limits of my language* mean the limits of my world."[15] By "my language" Wittgenstein means the type of language that is at all possible for me to understand (McGuinness 2002, 137f.; Schroeder 2006, 94). What kind of language does that exclude? For one thing, the change from "language" to "logic" in 5.61 suggests that a (would-be) language that was not in accordance with logic would be disqualified: "what we cannot think we cannot *say* either" (TLP 5.61d; cf. NB 84: 15.10.16). For another thing, for language to be meaningful, Wittgenstein thought, its names must be correlated with objects (TLP 3.203); hence, if an object is entirely inaccessible to me I cannot give it a name, and so cannot talk about it. So a language containing names of objects beyond my ken would be incomprehensible to me: it would not be "my language," and those objects would not be part of my world.

Now, as explained above, one implication of idealism that Wittgenstein was particularly impressed by is the elusiveness of the subject: nowhere in the world do I encounter my own subject (TLP 5.631) – let alone anybody else's. But if the subject is not part of the world, a proposition like "I see a tree" would appear to transgress the bounds of sense. For contrary to the requirements of the *Tractatus* semantics, the word "I" does not stand for anything in the world. Thus it should not appear in a logically more appropriate notation (cf. TLP 4.002). Analysis must transform the proposition into one that no longer contains the objectionable word "I." All that can be meant by "I see a tree" is: "A tree is seen" (cf. ML 309). But with the removal of the term that apparently denoted a subject we have removed the mark that distinguishes between propositions reporting *different* people's experiences, for instance, "I see a tree" and "You see a tree," or "Smith sees a tree." So "what the solipsist means is quite correct": *we cannot make sense of the idea that there might be different people having experiences*. There is only *this* experience ⇨ – and here I focus on whatever may be in my field of vision and hearing at the time. As Wittgenstein was to put it later in some lecture notes: "what I now see, this room, plays a unique role, it is the visual world!" (NfL 258; cf. PI § 398).

Here one might object that even if the self dissolves, in Humean fashion, into a bundle of experiences, it does not seem to follow that there could not be a multiplicity

of such bundles. Experience may only allow me to say "A tree is seen," but could I not easily imagine that at the same time somewhere else a house is seen, a rose is smelt and church bells are heard, each such experiential complex forming another person's world? This objection is not discussed in the *Tractatus*, but Wittgenstein provides a reply to it in *Philosophical Remarks*:

> The two hypotheses, that others have pain, and that they don't and merely behave as I do when I have, must have identical senses if every *possible* experience confirming the one confirms the other as well. In other words, if a decision between them on the basis of experience is inconceivable.
>
> (PR § 65: 94f.)

The difference between the view that others have experiences like me and the view that they behave exactly as if they had such experiences without having them is that the former hypothesis goes beyond the latter in assuming the existence of certain entities: others' experiences on top of their behavior. But such entities are necessarily inaccessible to me. I could not possibly encounter them – I cannot experience what is not experienced by me. Hence I cannot name them or talk about them either. So the first hypothesis in as much as it goes beyond the second makes no sense to me. "Shall we then call it an unnecessary hypothesis that anyone else has personal experiences? – But is it an hypothesis at all? For how can I even make the hypothesis if it transcends all possible experience? How could such a hypothesis be backed by meaning?" (BB 48). This position, implicit in the *Tractatus* and spelled out in Wittgenstein's later writings, can be called *Semi-Behaviorism*. Behaviorism tries to reduce all psychological states to dispositions to show certain patterns of behavior. Thus having a headache, for example, boils down to nothing more than a tendency to moan, complain, rub one's forehead, avoid vigorous movements, take an aspirin etc. etc. Wittgenstein's semi-behaviorism maintains this only about *other* people's psychological states. And isn't that exactly the way we experience things? In my case, to be sure, pain is not just a tendency to behave in certain ways: it is really felt (and very unpleasant); as regards others, I do not actually experience any pain: what I mean when I say they are in pain is that they are inclined to behave in a certain way. "Here it can be seen that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism" (TLP 5.64).[16] It is an accurate account of the world as it actually presents itself in a person's experience: only some pains are really felt (viz. one's own), all others occur only as observed behavior.

Roughly speaking, Wittgenstein's solipsism results from the combination of idealism and an empiricist-verificationist semantics. Indeed, idealism itself – the reduction of the world to the experienced world – can be seen as an extreme form of empiricism. As Wittgenstein remarked in 1930: "What is true about idealism is that the sense of a proposition derives entirely from its verification" (MS 110, 240; BT 500). Consequently, when later Wittgenstein reverts to these issues he tends to discuss the two doctrines together, one just being a more radical manifestation of the tendency that also motivates the other.

From the early 1930s on Wittgenstein becomes concerned that these two related doctrines are in conflict with our grammar. Contrary to idealism, there are significant grammatical differences between the uses of the words "(mental) representation"

(*Vorstellung*) and "thing" (BT 501). However, realism is not entirely correct either if it holds that representations are only subjective pictures (*Bilder*/*Abbilder*) of things, for this is based on a false analogy between the mental representation of a thing and the picture of a thing: as only the latter, but not the former, can be compared with the thing (BT 502). – It is perhaps no coincidence that at this point Wittgenstein takes realism to be indirect realism, assuming that a realist would hold a representative theory of perception; just as Schopenhauer does when he complains that realism entails an absurd duplication of worlds (WWR II, 9f).

Solipsism is criticized, at about the same time, for giving the word "I" an unduly exalted position, which in fact it does not have in our grammar (BT 508). But for quite a while Wittgenstein continues to insist that there is something right about his earlier view: "the solipsist is right in treating 'I have toothache' as being on a different level from 'He has toothache'" (AL 23; cf. ML 103). Wittgenstein no longer believes in a metaphysical subject, but he is still attracted by the asymmetric solipsist phenomenology: the observation that there is *felt* pain (one's own) and mere pain behavior (others'). He wrestles with this intuition, trying to break its spell, in the *Notes for Lectures*, written about 1935, where it is expressed again and again:

> [The solipsist] will say that behind the sentence 'I see . . .' when he says it and it's true, there stands something which does not stand behind "he sees" or "I see" when the other man says it.
>
> (NfL 228)

> But I *am* in a favoured position. I am the centre of the world.
>
> (NfL 257)[17]

To pursue the details of Wittgenstein's increasingly critical thoughts about solipsism and idealism would require a book-length study.[18] Suffice it to say that this discussion leads directly to the very centre of Wittgenstein's mature philosophy of mind, the so-called private language argument. The reason why solipsism cannot be stated in meaningful language is not only that it is an attempt to describe what cannot be otherwise, it is also that my solipsistic talk about what is *really* seen or felt would appear to be incomprehensible – nonsense – to anybody else. Thus out of Wittgenstein's earlier fascination with idealism and solipsism grows the idea of a necessarily private sensation language, critically discussed in §§ 243ff of the *Philosophical Investigations*.[19] It is noteworthy that the argument that Wittgenstein employed originally to take the step from Schopenhauerian idealism to solipsism is re-employed in the *Investigations* with an entirely different thrust. As explained above, his idea had been that I cannot make sense of others' really feeling pain because as far as actual experiences are concerned, only the ones *I* have are part of my world. The thought reappears in his later work: "If one has to imagine someone else's pain on the model of one's own, this is none too easy a thing to do: for I have to imagine pain which I *do not feel* on the model of the pain which I *do feel*" (PI § 302). But now it is used as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the solipsist's starting point, namely the idea that psychological concepts are grounded in introspection. "If one had to imagine someone else's pain on the model of one's own" – one wouldn't be able to: one could not even be *skeptical* about others' feelings: the very idea would be

nonsense! The fact that we do shows that such concepts *cannot* be grounded in introspection, but must essentially involve the idea of expressive behavior.[20]

III

Schopenhauer's influence on Wittgenstein's mature philosophy is, however, not entirely indirect and negative. Wittgenstein's discussion of voluntary action (PI §§ 611–32) contains Schopenhauer's insight that voluntary movements are not caused by mental acts of will. And in all likelihood that is not a coincidence. Schopenhauer writes:

> Every true act of [a subject's] will is also at once and inevitably a movement of his body; he cannot actually will the act without at the same time being aware that it appears as a movement of the body. The act of will and the action of the body are not two different states objectively known, connected by the bond of causality; they do not stand in the relation of cause and effect, but are one and the same thing, though given in two entirely different ways, first quite directly, and then in perception for the understanding.
>
> (WWR I, 100)

This passage is echoed by the young Wittgenstein when on November 4, 1916, thinking about the nature of the will, he notes:

> This is clear: it is impossible to will without already performing the act of the will.
> The act of the will is not the cause of the action but is the action itself.
> One cannot will without acting.
> . . .
> The fact that I will an action consists in my performing the action, not in my doing something else which causes the action.
>
> (NB 87f.: 4.11.16)

However, Wittgenstein's pre-*Tractatus* notebooks were really just that: notebooks, where he jotted down ideas as they occurred to him. One can see how in many points his thinking was still very tentative and unclear, not only regarding ethics and the mystical. Occasionally, a thought written down on one day is contradicted by the opposite view expressed a few days later. Thus, the Schopenhauerian rejection of a causal link between act of will and bodily movement is in conflict with some other ideas Wittgenstein had about the will. As already remarked, he was, at the time – probably as a result of his personal circumstances as a soldier in World War I – profoundly impressed by the idea that the world was beyond his control: "The world is independent of my will" (NB 73: 5.7.16).[21] Although it occurred to him that, in response, one might distinguish between some aspects of the world that are under my control and others that are not (I can move my arm, but I cannot move the moon); he dismissed that distinction as "intolerable," for he was strongly inclined to see the world as a whole, without any distinctions, in neat opposition to the subject whose world it is (NB 88: 4.11.16).[22] But if the whole world, including my body, is regarded as independent of my will, then acts of my will must be seen as distinct from movements of my body – contrary to Schopenhauer's identification of the two. Acts of the will can at best be the *causes* of movements of the

body, and the young Wittgenstein firmly believed that: "There is no compulsion making one thing happen because another has happened. The only necessity that exists is *logical* necessity" (TLP 6.37). Of course, this line of reasoning is flawed. Even if I cannot *necessitate* any events, it does not follow that events are altogether *independent* of my will. Still, it was this stoical vision of a person's utter powerlessness that prevailed with Wittgenstein at the time and made him adopt in the *Tractatus* the empiricist account of voluntary movements as caused by mental acts of will – in spite of the fact that he had already seen the force of Schopenhauer's repudiation of that picture. Again, in his 1916 notebooks Wittgenstein introduced the distinction between willing and mere wishing, which he may well have found in Schopenhauer (WWR I, 300, WWR II, 248; FR 15): wishing is indeed a mental event that may precede an action, but it fails to account for voluntariness:

> [the willed movement] is not accompanied just by a *wish*! But by will.
> . . .
> The wish precedes the event, the will accompanies it.
> Suppose that a process were to accompany my wish. Should I have willed the process?
> (NB 88: 4.11.16)

In the *Tractatus*, however, Wittgenstein slid back into a careless conflation of wishing and willing: "Even if all that we wish for were to happen, still this would only be a favour granted by fate, so to speak: for there is no *logical* connexion between the will and the world" (TLP 6.374).

It was only in the 1930s, when Wittgenstein had realized that the *Tractatus* contained "grave errors" (PI, Preface) and was going over a lot of the terrain again, that he came back to those earlier thoughts about willing, which would not fit into the framework of his first book. In *Eine philosophische Betrachtung* (1936), he reverts to his earlier distinction: "Here it is dangerous to confuse willing and wishing. – For when I raise my arm, it is not that I first wish that my arm will rise, and then indeed it does" (EPB 235). The point is repeated in *Philosophical Investigations* (PI § 616) where Wittgenstein argues, more generally, that voluntariness cannot be accounted for by any kind of mental event (of which one might then ask the embarrassing question whether *it* was voluntary or not). As for Schopenhauer's positive suggestion simply to identify the willing with the bodily action, it is now presented in inverted commas, indicating that Wittgenstein finds it attractive, but not entirely correct: "'Willing, if it is not to be a sort of wishing, must be the action itself. It cannot be allowed to stop anywhere short of the action.'" (PI § 615). His immediate critical comment is that *if* one were to identify willing with acting one would have to identify it with all sorts of acting: not just bodily movements, but also imagining or trying to do something. That contradicts the passage from Schopenhauer quoted above where willing is identified with bodily action, but elsewhere Schopenhauer gives a more inclusive account of willing that agrees fairly well with Wittgenstein's reminder:

> For not only willing and deciding in the narrowest sense, but also all striving, wishing, shunning, hoping, fearing, loving, hating, in short all that directly constitutes our own weal and woe, desire and inclination, is obviously only affection of the will, is a stirring, a

> modification, of willing and not-willing, is just that which, when it operates outwards, exhibits itself as an act of will proper.
>
> (WWR II, 202; cf. FR 10)

However, Wittgenstein's comment is only conditional ("*If* it is the action . . ."); he does not really identify willing and doing. In fact, he already rejected the identification two sections before, reminding us that "'Willing' ['*Wollen*'] is not the name of an action" (PI § 613). "Ich wollte aufstehen" ("I wanted to get up") does not report an action; certainly not the action of getting up. Against this, it might be said that it is not *Wollen*, in the ordinary sense of the word, that Schopenhauer means to identify with acting, but the act of will (*Willensakt*). This expression – as the English "willing" – is rarely used outside philosophy, and so cannot easily be claimed to mean something else. However, Wittgenstein's objection is not based on ordinary usage. The point is rather that an act of will, in philosophical terminology, is a mental occurrence, yet unprejudiced inspection shows that very often there is no such thing: It is simply not true that whenever we act voluntarily we experience a certain mental occurrence that accounts for the action's voluntariness. Schopenhauer suggests that seen from the inside the action appears to the agent as an act of willing, but that would still require the existence of a distinctive mental event of willing, which in fact is not there. And even if we could find some mental experience of willing, it would be hard to see how it, a *mental* occurrence, could be the same as a *bodily* action.

Perhaps, on a charitable interpretation, by an "act of will" Schopenhauer should not be taken to mean a mental occurrence. After all, his crucial insight is that beside the action itself there is no second event involved; and by insisting on an act of will as a mental event he would appear to be committed to what he is trying to rule out. Perhaps his use of the term "act of will" is best seen as just a – slightly misleading – hangover from the traditional account of voluntary action, which he rejected. On this reading, by ostensibly identifying a bodily action with a mental event Schopenhauer might be taken to make two points: first, that the assumed mental event does not really exist *as such,* separately from the action; and secondly, that the voluntariness of the action is something one is directly aware of (as one is directly aware of a mental occurrence). When you raise your arm you are not in doubt that it is your own doing. Both these points Wittgenstein could agree with.

IV

Attempts have been made to find affinities in yet other respects between Schopenhauer and the later Wittgenstein, notably by S. Morris Engel and Bryan Magee. The latter's unsupported claim that "the Kantian–Schopenhauerian framework . . . remains much the same" all through Wittgenstein's philosophical writings (Magee 1983, 301) need not detain us. Perhaps slightly less fanciful, or at least less vague, are the suggestions that Wittgenstein was inspired by Schopenhauer's views on language and philosophy, and that he borrowed from him key terms such as "family resemblance" (*Familienähnlichkeit*) and "form of life" (*Lebensform*) (Magee 1983, 302).

The latter point is another of Magee's unsupported claims. I suspect what he had in mind was a passage in § 54 of Volume I of *The World as Will and Representation*, where

Schopenhauer writes that "the form of all life is the present." However, the German does not contain the compound noun "Lebensform," but "Form des Lebens oder der Realität." Indeed, I don't know of any occurrence of the word "Lebensform" in Schopenhauer. More importantly, what Schopenhauer means by "Form des Lebens" – that one always lives in the present moment – has nothing whatsoever to do with Wittgenstein's concept of a "Lebensform," which means roughly the way we live and interact with other people (cf. PI § 23; Glock 2000).

The word "Familienähnlichkeit" does occur in Schopenhauer (e.g., WWR I, § 28b) – as in hundreds of other nineteenth- and twentieth-century German writers. It is not a technical term, but a commonly used German compound noun. Wittgenstein employed it to explain the way a concept can be held together without an underlying definition specifying necessary and sufficient conditions. This philosophical idea was to a certain extent anticipated by William James's (1902) remarks on the concept of religion (which Wittgenstein had read in 1912). It also occurs (definitely unknown to Wittgenstein) in Robert Musil's novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (1952, 1173f.). But there is not a trace of this philosophical idea in Schopenhauer, whose uses of the word "Familienähnlichkeit" have nothing to do with language.

A more interesting point of contact is that Schopenhauer rejects the idea that understanding words is a process of translating them into mental images (WWR I § 9). In that he is very sensible and fully in agreement with the later Wittgenstein's views. Did Wittgenstein derive his anti-imagist stance from Schopenhauer? We cannot tell for certain, but it seems rather unlikely. There is no clear evidence that Wittgenstein reread Schopenhauer while working on the *Tractatus*,[23] and it is even less likely that he should have reread him after 1920. The later Wittgenstein's occasional remarks about Schopenhauer are markedly unenthusiastic. About 1939 he writes:

> One could call Schopenhauer an altogether *crude* mind. I.e., he does have refinement, but at a certain level this suddenly comes to an end and he is as crude as the crudest. Where real depth starts, his finishes.
> One might say of Schopenhauer: he never takes stock of himself.
>
> (CV 41)

And in 1948 Wittgenstein expressly rejects his friend Drury's suggestion that his "fundamental ideas" might have been inspired by Schopenhauer: "No; I think I see quite clearly what Schopenhauer got out of his philosophy – but when I read Schopenhauer I seem to see to the bottom very easily. He is not deep in the sense that Kant and Berkeley are deep" (Drury 1981, 158). Some of the ideas of a "shallow" philosopher may well be useful and memorable – as Wittgenstein would always remember and occasionally refer to some of Schopenhauer's tenets or observations[24] – but one doesn't feel the need to go back to them. Apparently, the mature Wittgenstein regarded Schopenhauer as a thinker whom he had exhausted: who would not repay further study. If in those later years he had had another look into *The World as Will and Representation*, it had obviously not made a good impression on him and he would hardly have read on for very long.

Assuming, then, that Wittgenstein's only serious reading of Schopenhauer was before the completion of his early philosophy, it seems rather unlikely that the passage in which Schopenhauer remarks that words are not always accompanied by mental

images had made a great impression on Wittgenstein. For there is no reflection of it in the *Tractatus* or the early *Notebooks*, which, on the contrary, lean towards the idea that semantic representation is indeed mirrored by some form of mental representation.

It should also be noted that Schopenhauer's observation is very limited. He correctly observes that words are not always accompanied by mental images, but he doesn't seem to realize the philosophical significance of this negative observation. Locke had invoked images ("ideas") to explain how arbitrary signs are invested with meaning. If this is wrong, the question arises how else words become meaningful. Yet Schopenhauer, unaware of the problem, has nothing to suggest. All he says is: "The meaning of the speech is immediately grasped, accurately and clearly apprehended, without as a rule any conceptions of fancy being mixed up with it" (WWR I, 39). The problem that Locke's imagist theory of language tries to solve, unsatisfactorily, and to which Wittgenstein will give a very different solution; the philosophical problem of meaning and intentionality is one that Schopenhauer hasn't even seen. In that he compares unfavorably with Berkeley (confirming Wittgenstein's judgment about the latter's greater depth), who did not only remark that words can occur meaningfully without accompanying mental images, but who at least hinted at the idea that their significance lies in their use (for example, to arouse passions in the hearer) (Berkeley 1910, Introduction, XIX–XX). Thus it can be said of Berkeley with far greater justification than of Schopenhauer that he anticipated the Wittgensteinian insight that meaning is not to be explained in terms of images, but in terms of use.

Finally, it has been suggested that Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy owes something to Schopenhauer (Engel 1980, 250–52). The *tertium comparationis* is Kant's project of critical philosophy, his rejection of speculative metaphysics, which Schopenhauer to some extent endorsed and inherited, and which Wittgenstein might be said to have developed further (cf. Glock 1999, 427–35). There is no evidence of a Kantian influence on Wittgenstein's subversive account of philosophical doctrine as the result of conceptual confusion.[25] More likely is the surmise that the *Tractatus* project of "drawing a limit to thought" and meaningful discourse (TLP, Preface) is not only *analogous* to Kant's attempt to determine the limits of knowledge, but actually to some extent *inspired* by it, at least indirectly, through Schopenhauer's account of those Kantian ideas. However, the similarity between the two projects should not be exaggerated. Whereas Wittgenstein rejected all metaphysics as nonsense, Kant's aim was, on the contrary, to rehabilitate metaphysics. He rejected hopelessly speculative metaphysics only in order for it not to be mixed up with respectable, transcendental metaphysics: metaphysics of a kind that "will be able to be presented as science," as Kant promised in the title of one of his books.[26]

Anyway, the influence in this case would ultimately be Kant's, not Schopenhauer's, whose attitude to Kant's rejection of speculative metaphysics was notoriously ambivalent. Although Schopenhauer adopted Kant's framework of transcendental idealism, he did not in the end hold on to Kant's definition of the noumenal side as entirely beyond the reach of human understanding, but advanced the explanation that the thing-in-itself could, at least approximately, be understood as will. Overall, his conception of philosophy was markedly different from that of either Kant or Wittgenstein. Schopenhauer's philosophy tries to answer the questions to which traditionally religion would have given answers. It is a secular attempt to solve "the riddle of the world"

(WWR I, 428): to decipher the meaning of the world (which, as in a religious world-view, is taken to lie beyond the world of experience) in response to the experience of suffering and death (which are treated as inductive evidence for the sought explanation) (WWR II, 161). Philosophy as *Weltanschauung*, as a secular substitute for religion, was never Wittgenstein's project. It is true that at a time of personal crisis he attempted in his philosophical diary to clarify his own ethics and world view, and a few laconic remarks from those passages were inserted in the *Tractatus*. But (as noted in section I above) their link with the main body of the book is tenuous and they are certainly in conflict with (even the young) Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as "not a body of doctrine, but an activity" of linguistic clarification (TLP 4.112). This conception of philosophy would be taken more seriously by the later Wittgenstein (cf. WVC 183), and the *Philosophical Investigations* contains not even sporadic aphorisms about the meaning of life. It is not that he had lost interest in the big questions of morality and man's place in the world – far from it. What is more, he no longer maintained the unduly narrow criterion of sense propounded in the *Tractatus*, according to which only the propositions of natural science are meaningful (TLP 6.53). One can, according to the later Wittgenstein, meaningfully discuss questions of moral value and religious, or quasi-religious, attitude. It is only that he didn't regard them as a concern of his academic philosophy. *His* aim in philosophy was merely "to shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle" of conceptual confusion (PI § 309).

V

Schopenhauer's influence on Wittgenstein was considerable, but for the most part indirect and negative. I argued that the most obvious traces of Schopenhauerian ideas in Wittgenstein's writings are the least interesting ones. As a young man, in times of crisis, trying to formulate his ethics and attitude towards life, he remembered and adopted various thoughts from Schopenhauer, some of which he tacked on to his logical-philosophical treatise; but they have very little to do with his philosophical achievements. His real debt to Schopenhauer lies elsewhere. For one thing, the young Wittgenstein was persuaded by Schopenhauer's idealism (minus its transcendental side), and that proved extremely fruitful for his own thinking all through his life. Early on the empiricism, that recommended idealism to him in the first place, was pushed further and (perhaps with some additional inspiration from Weininger) led him to solipsism. Later, when he had become more critical of these ideas, they spurred him into a thorough investigation of the grammar of our psychological concepts; which is justly regarded as one of the main achievements of his mature masterpiece, the *Philosophical Investigations.* For another thing, he learnt from Schopenhauer that a voluntary action is not a bodily movement caused by a mental act of willing; and this thought was not just copied and pasted, but developed further and supported independently as part of a sustained discussion of the issue in his later writings.

See also 2 Perception and Understanding: Schopenhauer, Reid and Kant; 5 Schopenhauer and Transcendental Idealism; 10 Schopenhauer's *On the Will in Nature*: The Reciprocal Containment of Idealism and Realism; 16 Schopenhauer on the Metaphysics of Art and Morality.

Notes

1 I am grateful to Christopher Janaway for his very helpful comments on this chapter.
2 For detailed correlations see Janaway (1989, 318); Glock (1999, 437–43).
3 As he noticed himself: "I am conscious of the complete unclarity of all these sentences" (NB 79: 2.8.16).
4 For echoes of Weininger, see, e.g., NB 79d: 1.8.16; and NB 85: 15.10.16.
5 Curiously, some Schopenhauer enthusiasts have thought to detect in Wittgenstein's 1916 remarks a highly sophisticated critical discussion of Schopenhauer's system. He is, for instance, credited with having resolved a tension in Schopenhauer's system, who seems to recommend both that one will what is good and that one cease willing (Weiner 1992, 101f; cf. Magee 1983, 287). But given that Wittgenstein's expressed concern was how to live a happy life, his question whether one could achieve that by "not willing" (NB 77: 29.7.16) is clearly not quite the same as the question whether one should embrace a Schopenhauerian denial of the will. Anyway, "Wittgenstein's solution" is supposed to be that one may "want and yet not be unhappy if the want does not attain fulfilment" (Weiner 1992, 102). What a brilliant solution! Truly, a discussion of Schopenhauer's philosophy "at a most impressively profound level" (Magee 1983, 294).
6 That Wittgenstein had been impressed by Schopenhauer rather early in his life is confirmed by a diary note of 1931 where he gives an apparently chronological list of thinkers that influenced him: "Boltzmann, Hertz, Schopenhauer, Frege, Russell, Kraus, Loos, Weininger, Spengler, Sraffa" (CV 16). It is probable that he read Boltzmann, Hertz and Schopenhauer before his matriculation in 1906 (McGuinness 1988, 39), whereas he encountered Frege's works only in 1911.
7 This seems to be in conflict with a remark by von Wright who remembered Wittgenstein's "saying that it was Frege's conceptual realism which made him abandon his earlier idealistic views" (von Wright 1984, 6). Wittgenstein made an intensive study of Frege's writings during his first Cambridge years, 1911 to 1913, but there are still clear endorsements of idealism in his 1916 notebook and the *Tractatus*. It is of course possible that his later disenchantment with idealism about 1930 was at least partly a delayed effect of having read Frege.
8 "Dasjenige, was Alles erkennt und von Keinem erkannt wird, ist das Subjekt. . . . das Erkennende, nie Erkannte."
9 It is only since the 1870s that the term "solipsism" has been used instead of "(theoretical) egoism" (Gabriel 1995).
10 In a letter to Wittgenstein by his sister Hermine, dated November 18, 1916, she refers to a book by Weininger in a way that suggests that her brother had often spoken about it or perhaps propounded its views: "Ich habe mir Deinen Weininger mitgenommen und bin sehr glücklich über dieses Buch es ersetzt mir Dich ein wenig" (FB 30) – Cf. Schroeder (2006, ch. 1.3).
11 Note that Weininger's moral solipsism, which appealed so much to the young Wittgenstein, is diametrically opposed to Schopenhauer's ethics. Schopenhauer rejects the whole notion of duties to oneself (BM § 5); and the individual's "utter loneliness" stressed and embraced by Weininger, for Schopenhauer, by contrast, is only the experience of a bad character, who "everywhere feels a thick partition between himself and everything outside him," whereas a good character "feels himself intimately akin to all beings, takes an immediate interest in their weal and woe, and confidently assumes the same sympathy in them" (BM, 211).
12 Thus when Schopenhauer says that at death "the world vanishes" he goes on to add that "in other brains a similar world lives and moves, now as before" (WWR II, 500).

13 See Schroeder (2006, ch. 2.6); cf. MS 108, 1–2, quoted below.
14 For, according to the numbering system of the *Tractatus*, explained in a footnote at the beginning of the book, 5.62 is a comment on 5.6 (not on the immediately preceding remark 5.61).
15 Cf. TLP 5.62c: ". . . the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world."
16 This proposition (TLP 5.64) – far from being a rejection of solipsism (cf. Janaway 1989, 324) – is comparable to Berkeley's claim that his idealism is in fact the most realist doctrine: as it keeps accurately to what we actually experience (Berkeley 1910, 113; cf. Wittgenstein MS 110, 240; quoted below). Cf. Schopenhauer WWR II, 8: "True idealism . . . leaves the empirical reality of the world untouched."
17 Cf. NfL 228f., 255, 256, 258.
18 For a good overview, see Hacker (1986, ch. 8).
19 For a detailed account of Wittgenstein's arguments in this famous discussion see Schroeder (2006, ch. 4.7).
20 See Schroeder (2006, 202–206).
21 Cf. NB 73: 11.6.16 (quoted above).
22 Cf. Candlish 2001, 158. On the solipsistic idea that the world is my world, see section II above.
23 See section I above.
24 He was, for example, fond of retelling Schopenhauer's parable of the porcupines from PP II, ch. 31 § 396 (McGuinness 1988, 46). His calling him "a teacher of manners," in the 1930s, suggests that by that time he may have esteemed Schopenhauer more for his *Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit* and miscellaneous moral observations than for his philosophical system (cf. McGuinness 1988, 39).
25 On Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy see Schroeder (2006, ch. 4.3).
26 Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können (1783).

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25

Schopenhauer's Fairy Tale about Fichte

The Origin of The World as Will and Representation *in German Idealism*

GÜNTER ZÖLLER[1]

and almost will it
Seem to me, that it is as though in leaden times.

(Hölderlin 1992, Vol. I, 308)[2]

Just as Janus, the Roman God of the seasonal and yearly change, is bifrontal, facing the past as well as the future, so too Schopenhauer's thought stands in a twofold relation to the history of philosophy, in which it marks an enormous epochal change. The first, retrospective face looks back on the philosophical tradition and especially on the modern age of philosophy and its most reflected expression in Kant and his idealist successors, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. The second, prospective face of Schopenhauer's thought is turned toward the future of philosophy, which is marked by a loss of confidence in both the theoretical and practical self-sufficiency and independence of reason, and the beginning and early course of which constitutes the object of a critical diagnosis and an untimely philosophical therapy in Schopenhauer's thought.

In the reception of Schopenhauer's thinking, which starts in the mid nineteenth century and which from the very outset and over long periods of time up until the present primarily has occurred outside of academic philosophy, the center of interest for philosophers, publicists, literates, musicians, artists, scientists and politicians lies in the Schopenhauer who gazes into the future and who actively shapes that very future with his thinking. In the process, Schopenhauer is squarely placed in a chronological and intellectual context that is determined less by his own biography and more by his historical reception – for which the philosopher himself had to wait practically until the end of his life and which occurred for the most part posthumously.

The early scholarly study of Schopenhauer's life and work also paid significantly more attention to his role as a forerunner and initiator of a coming age and its philosophy than to his retrospective relationship with classical philosophical modernity. Only more recently have the altogether differently orientated comprehensive studies of

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Rudolf Malter (1988; 1991)[3] and Rüdiger Safranski (1990) expressly and consequently focused on the contemporary circumstances and background to the evolution and unfolding of Schopenhauer's thought. Malter minutely determines the systematic place of Schopenhauer's philosophy, while Safranski furnishes a captivating cultural-historical contextualization of Schopenhauer's intellectual biography. In different ways, both authors take account of the fact that the decisive origin of Schopenhauer's thought precedes the time of its earliest public recognition and influence by several decades and falls entirely within the flowering of German idealism.[4]

Biographically and philosophically, Schopenhauer is not at all a contemporary of Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx. Schopenhauer was born in the year before the outbreak of the French Revolution and completed his academic studies prior to the conclusion of the Napoleonic era. More importantly yet, Schopenhauer had formulated the outlines of his philosophical system even before Fichte's death and before Hegel's first professorial appointment in Heidelberg. Moreover, Schopenhauer elaborated his own philosophical system under the influence of his philosophical studies at the newly founded university in Berlin (1811–1813), and he carried out this development in an explicit and implicit examination of the contemporary idealistic philosophy, which he came to know during his Berlin study period by attending lectures and through independent reading.

There are primarily three authors that Schopenhauer intensively studied in Berlin: Kant, Fichte and Schelling. On all three of them there are exhaustive notes in Schopenhauer's extant university notebooks, in which he carefully excerpted from, commented on and reacted critically to their writings (Schopenhauer 1966–1975, Vol. II, 251–304 (Kant), 304–40 (Schelling) and 340–60 (Fichte)). Other significant preserved documents that exhibit an intensive and extensive study of these three philosophers are Schopenhauer's comprehensive comments and marginalia in his preserved copies of the writings of Kant, Fichte and Schelling, which date at least partly from his university years in Berlin (Schopenhauer 1966–1975, Vol. V, 45–58 (Fichte), 78–99 (Kant) and 143–49 (Schelling)). Finally, among Schopenhauer's extant notebooks there exist detailed and carefully conserved lecture notes on three of Fichte's university courses from the winter semester 1811/1812, in which Fichte had presented *seriatim* a short introduction to the study of philosophy, a detailed guide to philosophy, entitled "On the Facts of Consciousness" ("*Ueber die Thatsachen des Bewußtseyns*"), and a monumental presentation of transcendental philosophy or *Wissenschaftslehre* (Schopenhauer 1966–1975, Vol. II, 16–216; Fichte 1962ff., series IV, Vol. IV, 59–67 (*Fichtes Vorlesungen über das Studium der Philosophie. Nachschrift Schopenhauer*) and 195–237 (*Ueber die Thatsachen des Bewußtseyns. Nachschrift Schopenhauer*)).

1. Resented Relations

The origin of Schopenhauer's systematic thought within the philosophy of German idealism not only concerns the general tendencies and the early development of his thought. Also Schopenhauer's proposed elaboration of the system of philosophy, which was completed in 1818 and published the same year under the title *The World as Will and Representation* (with 1819 given as the year of publication), is strongly marked by

its intellectual affinity with the virtually simultaneous endeavors of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel to ground and execute philosophy as a systematic science of the principles of everyone and everything. It is one of the ironies of the history of philosophy and an indication of the secret filiations in the philosophy of German idealism that the first fully realized system of philosophy – after the many and varied, yet nonetheless always only fragmentarily executed presentations of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel – stems in fact from Schopenhauer, whose four-part main work prepares and presents the basic philosophical disciplines of epistemology, philosophy of nature, aesthetics and ethics in a systematic order. Compared to *The World as Will and Representation*, Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, published in Heidelberg in 1817, is merely a comprehensive (and as such complete) sketch of a philosophical system.

The internal affiliation of Schopenhauer's thought with the philosophy of German idealism is not only manifest in the common ambition for a systematic philosophy and philosophical system. Methodically and doctrinally, too, there is a deep affinity between the main representatives of classical German philosophy studied by Schopenhauer and Schopenhauer's own thinking, which, to be sure, is original, yet did not fall from heaven ready-made but arose quite specifically from a productive engagement with the thought of Kant, Fichte and Schelling. Schopenhauer's profound affinity with German idealism is also not altered by the fact of his notorious polemics against the colleagues in the field. Against the background of Schopenhauer's manifest complicity with German idealism, his attacks on idealist school philosophy appear more as deliberate attempts to distance himself from competing approaches and to more starkly highlight his own philosophical contributions than might have been warranted by the fact of the matter.

The extent of Schopenhauer's clandestine association with German idealism becomes clear if one compares the key topics, theses and theorems of his philosophy with the problems and attempted solutions of Kant and his three main successors. With Kant, Fichte and the early Schelling, Schopenhauer shares the transcendental approach, according to which objective determination is grounded in cognitive functions. Like Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, Schopenhauer is entirely committed to the project of critically establishing a new *philosophia prima* or metaphysics. Moreover, at the center of Schopenhauer's philosophical thought – as in Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel – stands the nature, the status and the function of subjectivity, and especially the problem of the unity of subjectivity. Furthermore, Schopenhauer's philosophical account of the world as representation and as will belongs among the post-Kantian presentations of the "history of self-consciousness" (Fichte, Schelling) or the "phenomenology of spirit" (Hegel). Finally, in Schopenhauer, as earlier already in Kant and subsequently in both the later Fichte and the later Schelling, the chief concern of philosophy is to study the basic tenets that constitute our existence and exhibit the complementary relation between factuality and freedom, the finite and the infinite, and, more generally, between limitation and delimitation.[5]

To be sure, in addition to the indicated principal affinities between Schopenhauer and the main representatives of German idealism – which could be detailed even further for each of the key figures – there exist dissimilarities and differences of both a generalized and a specialized kind. For instance, one could point to the supplements to the second edition of the main work, whose decidedly naturalist approach seems to run counter to the transcendental approach of the original version. Yet even after the

historical and systematic limits of Schopenhauer's affiliation with the philosophy of German idealism have been recognized, far reaching programmatic as well as doctrinal communalities still remain that warrant viewing Schopenhauer as a distant relative, perhaps even as the prodigal son of German idealism. The philosophical physiognomy of Schopenhauer's controversial and distorted portraits of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel contains hidden family resemblances that point to a common intellectual heritage, and that make the self-proclaimed Caspar Hauser of the history of philosophy appear as the self-styled *enfant terrible* of classical German philosophy.

2. Back to Fichte

That Schopenhauer's philosophical system is a direct descendant of German idealism is also documented in the conceptual orientation that each of the four books of *The World as Will and Representation* takes from the fundamental positions of Kant and his idealist successors. Thus the consideration of the world as representation operating under the principle of sufficient reason, in Book One ("Theory of the Entire Representing, Thinking and Knowing"),[6] is thoroughly indebted to Kant's transcendental idealism, which Schopenhauer subjects to a popularizing simplification. The view of the world as will operating under the principle of sufficient reason, in Book Two ("Metaphysics of Nature"),[7] draws on Schelling's basic approach to the philosophy of nature, which Schopenhauer combines with Fichte's basic positions on the transcendental theory of the will and the body as well as with reflections from Kant's teleology of nature on the methodological concept of symbolic anthropomorphism. *Prima facie* the view of the world as representation independent of the principle of sufficient reason, in Book Three ("Metaphysics of the Beautiful"),[8] is based on Plato's theory of Forms. However, it is in fact shaped by both the critically revised Platonism of Kant's doctrine of the pure concepts of reason (ideas) and by his theory of pure aesthetic contemplation.

Only the view of the world as will independent of the principle of sufficient reason, in Book 4 ("Metaphysics of Morals"),[9] appears to be a different matter, given that the conceptions developed therein of the denial of the will, the demotivation of willing and the overcoming of the principle of individuality seem to lead to an ethics of compassion that is maximally removed from the moral philosophy of Kant and his idealist successors, with its central theorem of the practicality of reason, and which Schopenhauer himself traces back to direct inspiration by the doctrines of Hinduism and Buddhism. Thus the concluding and crowning portion of Schopenhauer's philosophical system appears to forsake completely the confines of classical German philosophy and even the whole of Western thought.

Nevertheless, serious doubts need to be voiced concerning the viability of any appeal to Eastern thought for argumentatively validating Schopenhauer's conception of ethics. In particular, the junction endorsed by Schopenhauer between the metaphysics of deindividuation and the ethics of universal solidarity seems not to have had any precedent in Far Eastern thought, but to present a conglomeration of Hindu and Buddhist elements removed – either by Schopenhauer himself or by his sources – from their original context (see Kurbel 2005). The suspicion arises that Schopenhauer belatedly

embellished a conception of ethics that was close to him for both personal and systematic reasons with Far Eastern credentials thereby incorporating them into the presentation of his own thought in line with his characteristic tendency to disguise his own intellectual origins.

This suspicion is strengthened by a more detailed examination of the beginnings of Schopenhauer's philosophy – a philosophy "that is to be ethics and metaphysics in one" (Schopenhauer 1966–1975, Vol. I, 55). This examination is afforded by the preserved documents of his time in Berlin. In particular, a look at Schopenhauer's critical discussion of Fichte's thought, which can be linked directly to his attendance of Fichte's lectures in Berlin in the years 1811/12, is able to yield vital clues regarding the elaboration of Schopenhauer's own conception of a metaphysics-*cum*-ethics. More precisely, it is a critical discussion of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and of Fichte's work, *The System of Ethics*, from 1798, to be dated to the first half of 1812, which constitutes in effect the missing link between the idealist metaphysics and moral philosophy of Schopenhauer's predecessors (and precursors) and the original further development they received in Schopenhauer's metaphysical ethics of the denial of the will.

3. Schopenhauer Hears and Reads Fichte

The multiple affinities between Schopenhauer's system of philosophy and Fichte's thought have not gone unnoticed in scholarly research (cf. Schöndorf 1982; Kamata 1988; Welsen 1997; Miodonski 2002), even though Schopenhauer himself did everything possible to downplay Fichte's formative influence on his own development. In particular, there are two Fichtean doctrines that had a lasting effect on Schopenhauer – one belonging to the core of Fichte's epistemology, the other to the systematic arsenal of his metaphysics. In the first instance, Fichte's influence can already be detected in Schopenhauer's dissertation, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, from 1813. In both cases the influence is manifest in the two editions of *The World as Will and Representation*.

Schopenhauer's epistemology adopts the Fichtean conception of the "intellectuality of intuition,"[10] according to which the intuition of the external world is not the exclusive work of the senses, but is grounded in the application of the basic intellectual function of causality to the raw material of the sensations, so "that all *perception* is not only of the senses but of the intellect; in other words, *pure knowledge through the understanding of the cause from the effect*" (WWR I, 13). Schopenhauer's notion that intuition (or perception) has a mixed, sensible-intellectual character is at odds with Kant's doctrine of the solely sensible character of our intuitions. But it also differs from the recourse to a non-sensible, merely "intellectual" intuition in Kant's idealist successors. Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel, as well as Fichte in some of his works, all refer to "intellectual intuition" to characterize the unconditioned, "absolute" basic nature of the subject of cognition (or "I" or "spirit").

There is only one publication in which Schopenhauer could have found a precedent for the conception of the intellectuality of intuition (advocated by Schopenhauer against Kant), viz., Fichte's *The Vocation of Man* (1800). The work's popular style and unscholastic transmission of the basic doctrines of transcendental philosophy even

may have served as a model for Schopenhauer's own unacademic mode of presentation. In Book 2 of *The Vocation of Man,* entitled "Knowledge" (*Wissen*), Fichte discusses in a fictitious dialogue the intellect's unconscious employment of the principle of sufficient reason in the perception of objects (Fichte 1962ff., series I, Vol. VI, 226–33, especially 231 ("Satz des Grundes")). – The fact that this particular work of Fichte's is not to be found in Schopenhauer's largely intact personal library (which still contains some ten volumes by Fichte), should not be taken as an indication that Schopenhauer did not know this work, which already at the time was Fichte's most widely known and influential work – and still is so today. Rather one might suspect a deliberate erasure of traces on Schopenhauer's part.

Schopenhauer's second systematic borrowing, the one pertaining to Fichte's metaphysics, can also be traced back to *The Vocation of Man*. In the fictitious dialogue of Book 2, Fichte establishes an identity thesis concerning the relation between mind and body, according to which, "this body is nothing but a sensification [*Versinnlichung*] of myself, the one who thinks internally, to a determinate filled space" and "that I, the spiritual, pure intelligence, and I, this body in the world of bodies, are entirely one and the same" (Fichte 1962ff., series I, Vol. VI, 248). Schopenhauer could have discovered a stricter, more formal proof of the identity of mind and body in Fichte's *Foundations of Natural Right* (1796/1797), where one's own body is outright defined as that part of the world in which the I is able to act effectively merely through its own willing (Fichte 1962ff., series I, Vol. III, 361–65, especially 363; Fichte 2000, 53–58, especially 56).[11] In Schopenhauer there is an almost identical formulation for the exemption of the relationship between body and mind from the principle of sufficient reason, for "between the act of the will and the action of the body there is no causal connection; rather the two are immediately one and the same" (FR, 114f., translation modified).[12]

To be sure, besides the factual affinities between Fichte and Schopenhauer, which also include the systematic as well as the phenomenological primacy of willing in both authors, a number of serious objections and doubts with regard to Fichte still abound in careful notes that were not intended for publication and that are surprisingly free of the aggressive anti-Fichtean polemics Schopenhauer cultivated in his published writings. Of particular importance in this respect are Schopenhauer's critical reflections on Fichte's undertaking of a deduction of the moral law in *The System of Ethics*. Schopenhauer rejects Fichte's proposed radical integration of the moral law into the world of sense, to which he opposes, in a return to Kant and in anticipation of his own developing doctrine of the "better consciousness," the radical separation of the world of sense and intellect from the counter-world of pure practical reason (Schopenhauer, 1966–1975, Vol. II, 356f.).

While Schopenhauer's direct borrowings from Fichte as outlined above only relate to single doctrines, there is also the influence that Fichte exerted on the basic conception of Schopenhauer's system – an influence that can be traced back specifically to Schopenhauer's attendance of Fichte's lectures in the winter semester of 1811/1812. Up to now, the mode and extent of this basic influence have not been sufficiently taken into account in Schopenhauer scholarship. One might even say that the specific importance of the later Fichte for Schopenhauer has been overlooked outright so far. This is due to the fact that the pertinent text from Schopenhauer's *Nachlaß* that contains his critical discussion of the later Fichte – especially of the presentation of the *Wissenschafts-*

lehre from the winter semester of 1811/1812 – has been incorrectly attributed from its initial discovery up to now. Gwinner, the custodian of Schopenhauer's *Nachlaß*, was the first to analyze and describe the text along with Schopenhauer's other notes on Fichte. Because the notes were located, in part, on the back cover page of Schopenhauer's copy of an 1802 edition of Fichte's *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*, originally published in 1794/95, Gwinner drew the conclusion that the notes referred to this first exposition of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, and the only one published by Fichte himself.[13] In his edition of Schopenhauer's handwritten remains, Arthur Hübscher followed Gwinner's assessment when classifying the contents of the notes in question.[14] Only recently Alexis Philonenko has called this text – unquestioningly following Hübscher – "a summary of the *Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*" (Philonenko 1997, 438). This erroneous assessment is all the more astonishing because Philonenko is also an expert on Fichte and one of his most influential interpreters in the French-speaking world. But Philonenko's expertise lies chiefly in the early Fichte of the Jena period (1794–1799) and in the first period of the later Fichte (since 1800), particularly the presentations of the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1804. By contrast, up until quite recently, the very last Fichte of the final Berlin years (1810–1814) still remained largely *terra incognita* in Fichte scholarship, not the least due to the fact that the series of works from the last four years of Fichte's life had not been available in reliable editions and that there are still a number of texts awaiting their first edition ever or their first reliable edition.[15]

However, Schopenhauer himself was in the envious position of having come to know some of Fichte's late works *in statu nascendi* – the very works that would only come to be published four decades later or even only two centuries later. Thus he possessed first-hand knowledge of Fichte's final philosophical doctrines.[16] The extent and intensity of Schopenhauer's critical discussion of the very late Fichte may be gathered from the lecture notes he made of all three of Fichte's university courses from the winter semester 1811/12. In stark contrast to Schopenhauer's subsequently launched distorted image of his relation to Fichte, these lecture notes furnish in essence an objective record of the contents of Fichte's lectures, and this so much that Schopenhauer's lecture transcripts have been incorporated as an important textual source into the edition of Fichte's Complete Works by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. A few, mostly critical comments from Schopenhauer's hand are to be found in the notes from what is chronologically Fichte's third lecture course – concerning what is labeled in Fichte research the "*Wissenschaftslehre* 1812," after the year in which this presentation was given. Rather than interspersing the recorded Fichtean *dicta* with his own reflections and objections, Schopenhauer almost always clearly separates his own remarks in his transcripts with the comment "I" ("*Ego*").

4. A Fairy Tale

In addition to his lecture notes on the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1812 and still in the course of the same year (the dating is based on the various types of paper and the water marks of the paper used), hence presumably toward the end of Fichte's lectures or not long afterward, Schopenhauer composed the text that so far always, erroneously, has been

brought into connection with his critical reading or re-reading of Fichte's first published presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* from the year 1794/95, hence dating from some 20 years before the text in question. Yet this text contains doctrinal details and exhibits a methodology that is lacking entirely in the early presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* and definitely belongs to the core of the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1812. Schopenhauer's text consists of approximately one printed page and is entitled, "*Fichte's Leaden Fairy Tale*" ("*Fichtes bleiernes Märchen*") (emphasis in the original) (Schopenhauer 1966–1975, Vol. II, 341f.).[17] In it Schopenhauer fashions the basic argument of the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1812 into a narrative form and adorns it with the elements of a fairy tale.

The text starts with the proposition borrowed unchanged from Fichte's presentation: "There is *being*." Going beyond Fichte's presentation, Schopenhauer then explains the choice of the title "being" as being "formed from the superlative of consciousness" and being "many thousand times more real" than consciousness, as the matter is put in the characteristic style of a fairy tale. Schopenhauer is employing literary devices in order to render Fichte's position, according to which consciousness makes the experience of something exceeding and encompassing it and as the manifestation (or "appearance") of which it comes to understand itself. At the same time Schopenhauer imports into Fichte's reflections the onto-metaphysical conception of the real in its quantitative and qualitative differentiability, together with the related conception of God as the most supremely real entity. The reading of Fichte's starting point chosen by Schopenhauer takes into account the status of the development of Fichte's philosophy in the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1812, especially the fact that the late Fichte maintains a strict separation between the Absolute itself and consciousness (or the I).

In his next interpretive step Schopenhauer attributes to this being the "desire for self-intuition" and the resulting "self-intuition of being," which he explicates further in the sexual sense of knowledge, or rather of self-knowledge, as an "act of generation," which is at once an act of birth, and hence establishes the bisexuality of being ("hybrid" or "cross"). Thus arises "knowledge" (*Wissen*), which in turn gives birth to "the little child I that has hands and feet and the title Principle." The three-tiered fairy-tale sequence of entities generating each other exactly corresponds to Fichte's argumentative procedure in the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1812, which goes from being (the Absolute) to knowledge as its appearance and then to the I as the form under which cognition assumes the function of a principle (cf. Fichte 1962ff., series II, Vol. XIII, 51–56, 59–61, 131–55, esp. 140 ("*Sichheit*"), 145 ("*Ichform*")).

The next stage of Schopenhauer's Fichtean fairy tale also has its exact counterpart in the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1812. Due to its origin in the drive of knowledge toward activity, the I as principle is marked by "an unrelenting *drive* to activity." Fichte himself had attributed such a drive to the I (Fichte 1962ff., series II, Vol. XIII, 132, 152, 166, 174f.). A certain freedom in the presentation of Fichte's position is discernable when Schopenhauer has the mother and the grandmother of the I (knowledge and being, respectively) pacify the latter and divert its attention from themselves by providing it with some mass, called the world, on which it can exercise its drive for activity in ever new forms – by biting on it, as it were. This interaction between the biting I and the bitten world results in the "synthesis of intuiting the world," which is subject to never-ending change.

In order to bring direction and shape into the restless and aimless activity of the I, the grandmother sends to the grandchild (i.e., being sends to the I) "the extraordinary

ambassador *ought* [*Sollen*], who, incidentally, is through and through formality, as is customary with ambassadors." Being's message to the I consists in the instruction that the I is to bite the "chunk of world" into a shape, such "that he neatly nibble it into the portrait of the grandmother." This part of the fairy tale corresponds to the prescription of an ought to the I in Fichte, an ought that is grounded in being itself and that is to bring about the "image" (*Bild*) of being in and through knowledge (Fichte 1962ff., series II, Vol. XIII, 162, 168, 172). In the final twist in Schopenhauer's fairy tale the I hears the ambassador and his message "assures obediently to do its best, asks to extend greetings several times, and continues to nibble." The ought remains unfulfilled; the I is caught up in being driven aimlessly hither and thither – such is Schopenhauer's critical commentary on Fichte's markedly different confidence in the obedience of the child, i.e., in the morality of the I (Fichte 1962ff., series II, Vol. XIII, 175, 178).

Anyone familiar with the first, printed version of the *Wissenschaftslehre* from the years 1794/95 would be incapable of recognizing its architectonics and doctrines in Schopenhauer's fairy tale about Fichte. Yet anyone familiar with Fichte's presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* from the year 1812 will easily discern in the fairy tale its basic tenets, which appear even in their original Fichtean sequence from being through cognition to the I and the latter's modalities as drives and images, albeit transposed into a fairy tale. But how is one to evaluate Schopenhauer's fairy tale version of the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1812? The question concerns both the fact that Schopenhauer subjected the lectures he attended to a literary transformation and the manner in which thereby he composed an abridged version of the *Wissenschaftslehre* 1812. Is Schopenhauer's retelling to be regarded as an act of satire and parody, in which Fichte's listener mocks what was taught and contrives a comic deflation of Fichte's doctrine? Schopenhauer's choice of "fairy tale" for the title of his short text seems to suggest this. One immediately associates some fantastic tidings and an associated claim to untruth. It appears as though Schopenhauer is seeking to establish the unreal, fictitious character of an entire philosophical theory – that of the Absolute and its appearance-to-itself through and as knowledge in Fichte.

Yet one ought to expect something more subtle from an author whose later philosophical critique of religion turned on the concept of truth in its drapery as lie,[18] and who was a connoisseur and amateur of literature at that. The title "fairy tale" connotes not only what is untrue and merely fictional, but also denotes a literary genre designed to render intuitive complex states of affairs by employing a popular guise and feigning anonymous authorship. Toward the close of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth century a heightened interest in the genre of the fairy tale may be observed, which – in addition to leading to the collection and written recording of predominantly orally transmitted folk fairy tales – manifests itself in new, individually authored fairy-tale texts and leads to the establishment, in German literature, of the genre of the artistic fairy tale (*Kunstmärchen*) (Cf. Wührl 2003; Klotz 2002; Mayer and Tismar 2003). The artificial character of the literary fairy tale is particularly evident in the allegorically coded artistic fairy tales from the epoch around 1800. Some of their outstanding examples are Goethe's text with the generic title *The Fairy Tale* (*Das Märchen*), which concludes his novella rondo *Conversations of German Emigrants* (*Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*) from 1795 (Goethe 1968, Vol. VI, 209–41), and *Klingsohr's Fairy Tale* (*Klingsohrs Märchen*) at the end of Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* – a work

whose origin can be situated at the turn of the century (Novalis 1969, 232–58, and the explanations 689f., 711–14).

Placed within this literary context, Schopenhauer's Fichtean fairy tale assumes more significant features, revealing itself as a stylistic exercise in a genre which authors and interpreters alike often have defined outright as rendering complex, involved and difficult to convey matters in a nutshell (*in nuce*). Schopenhauer uses this very Latin phrase for a conceptual as well as linguistic abbreviation in the formulation of the title for his short text, so that the term is not only to be understood as a reference to Schopenhauer's retelling of Fichte's philosophical theory in the style of a fairy tale, but also as an indication of the fact that Fichte's own theoretical construction is already to be read (or heard) as a text with the features of a fairy tale that Schopenhauer makes explicit in a condensed form. Moreover, the fairy tale character, which Schopenhauer claims is implicit in Fichte's own theory (it being not merely an addition by Schopenhauer's reconstruction along the lines of a fairy tale), does not in itself disqualify Fichte's elaboration. Rather Schopenhauer's talk of a fairy tale reflects the recognition of the fundamental difficulty of explaining clearly and in a communicable manner the main matter that is the concern of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and which also stands at the center of Schopenhauer's early thought, viz., the supersensible and its relation to the sensible. More specifically, it reflects the recognition of having to resort to the indirect presentation of what is really non-presentable and what can only be rendered indirectly, by means of artificially designed signs and sign systems. Within a short period of time after writing his Fichtean fairy tale, Schopenhauer will present his own theory of the world as will with a similar device and place it under similar methodological reservations.

5. A Fairy Tale in a Leaden Age

But Schopenhauer does not simply characterize Fichte's fundamental philosophizing and its abridged reconstruction as a "fairy tale" or a "fairy tale *in nuce*." He also terms this fairy tale "leaden" (*bleiern*). At first glance, this gives rise to a misleading semblance, which, however, can be dispelled by further reflection. For one might be tempted to presume that Schopenhauer's talk of Fichte's leaden fairy tale debases the fairy tale as "heavy" or "ponderous," just as one might speak of "leaden limbs." Schopenhauer's expression would then indicate a criticism of the clumsy conception and execution of Fichte's philosophical theory. Yet there are no indications in Schopenhauer's further unfolding of Fichte's fairy tale for interpreting the word "leaden" in this context as derogatory.

Rather the findings of the text suggest that the predicate "leaden" refers specifically to the open end, or more precisely: the inability to come to an end, that characterizes Fichte's fairy tale in Schopenhauer's version of it – the perennial inefficiency of the purely formal ought with regard to the merrily nibbling I. It is precisely at this point that a difference comes in between the energetic, confident assessment of the ought in Fichte, for whom, like for Kant, ought implies can and, moreover, the infinite progress of the real toward the ideal by means of moral effort, on the one hand, and Schopenhauer's assessment of the ultimate lack of success in willing the doing of what ought to be done, on the other hand. Schopenhauer's assessment of Fichte's fairy tale as "leaden" does not refer to a meager execution but to the world-view it expresses, which

conceives human beings as infinitely striving, as forever and in vain going after what ought to be willed and done. Against this world-view principle of unsuccessful striving in a world limited by sense, understanding and reason, Schopenhauer insists on the possibility of an alternative, "better" consciousness that "lies *high above all reason*" (emphasis in the original) (Schopenhauer, 1966–1975, Vol. I, 44 (*Manuskripte 1813*))[19] – and he does so already, in a first outline, in elaborations that are concurrent with the fairy tale about Fichte, and then, more completely elaborated, in the ethics of Book 4 of *The World As Will and Representation*, with its core doctrine of redemption from the worldly nexus of ought and will.

Thus the talk of a "leaden fairy tale" is to be taken as an indication that Schopenhauer is seeking to emphasize a central trait of both Fichte's and Kant's philosophy with respect to its stifling or – transposed into the psychological sphere – depressing consequences and implications, and that he does so by means of the literary device of a fairy tale. Schopenhauer's use of the term "leaden" in fact matches a formulation that the poet Friedrich Hölderlin employed in a fragment from 1800 or 1801 (and used as a motto to this contribution). To be sure, Schopenhauer could not have known Hölderlin's poetic fragment; he most likely never even heard of Hölderlin's name. In this unfinished elegy, which exists in a number of textual variants and has been edited under the titles *The Walk into the Country* and *The Inn*, the appeal of the lyrical I to the friend – Hölderlin's poem is dedicated to the Stuttgart merchant, Christian Landauer – to come out "into the open," is contrasted immediately with the oppressive, stifling climatic and atmospheric weight that is to be fled. In particular, the lyrical I compares the present time of the poem with another state in time, and conveys its impression "that it is as though in leaden times" (Hölderlin, 1992, Vol. I, 308–10 ("Das Gasthaus") and Hölderlin, 2000, 222 f. ("Der Gang aufs Land")).

Whether, as one commentator suggests, Hölderlin wished to continue the declining series of ages, familiar from Hesiod, beyond the age of iron (Cf. Hölderlin 1992, Vol. III, 176), may remain an open question. Decisive for an enlightening comparison with Schopenhauer's phrase of a leaden fairy tale is the countermovement ("into the open") that is linked with the reference to the leaden times in Hölderlin and the indication thereby provided of an escape from this time and age. In Schopenhauer this escape into another time and age has its counterpart in the distancing from Fichte's fairy tale about the eternal ought and also – in texts from the mature phase of Schopenhauer's thought – in the movement of escape from "temporality"[20] and its endless striving, which reveals itself to be an equally endless suffering. Schopenhauer's reference to the "leaden fairy tale" is not an indication of complete hopelessness, but an indication of the inherent irresolvable problems of a basic view – that of Kant and Fichte – that is in need of being examined and surpassed. Schopenhauer's Fichtean fairy tale exactly delineates the systematic place of origin for his own ethics and its overthrowing of the Kantian-Fichtean moral philosophy.

6. From the Freedom of the Will to the Freedom of Non-Willing

But Schopenhauer's examination of Fichte encompasses not only the critical diagnosis that Fichte's thought is underpinned by a "leaden" world-view. In another text,

composed at almost exactly the same time as the fairy tale, the first elements of Schopenhauer's original ethics of non-willing are to be found. What is remarkable about this second key text of Schopenhauer's critique of Fichte is that in this case the latter's thinking is not subject to a negative critique. Rather, it is a text in which a train of Fichte's thought meets with Schopenhauer's explicit approval and serves as the direct starting point for a sketch of his emerging basic conception of ethics. Hence Schopenhauer not only discovers in Fichte a theoretically and existentially deficient philosophical position, but also the foundations for further developing a concept inherent in Fichte into his own original conception of ethics.

This second document detailing Schopenhauer's productive engagement with Fichte is his fairly extensive set of notes on Fichte's published moral philosophy – *The System of Ethics* from 1798. Schopenhauer owned a copy of the original edition, into which he entered detailed marginalia, all of which Arthur Hübscher has dated to the period "around 1812" (Schopenhauer 1966–1975, Vol. V, 53–58). Quite obviously Fichte's *System of Ethics* held a particular interest for Schopenhauer.[21] The extent of his notes on this text in particular clearly surpasses that of his documented examination of all the other works by Fichte, with the exception of the even more extensively and intensively studied *Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge.* In addition to recording numerous and often detailed marginalia in his copy of Fichte's *System of Ethics*, Schopenhauer also subjected Fichte's text to a detailed analysis in the notebooks that he kept from 1811 to 1818. Arthur Hübscher dates these notes to the year 1812. This set of remarks surpasses Schopenhauer's notes on all other works by Fichte in extent and thoroughness.

That Schopenhauer studied Fichte's *System of Ethics* more thoroughly than any other Fichtean text and virtually any other philosophical work is as indicative of both the significance of Fichte's ethics for Schopenhauer's philosophical development as is the circumstance that this examination occurred precisely in the year 1812. Fichte himself considered ethics to be the direct systematic continuation of the foundational philosophy established in the *Wissenschaftslehre* in the narrower sense, and he stressed the intimate relation of the contents of ethics with those of the *Wissenschaftslehre* (Fichte 1962ff., series I, Vol. V, 33f. (*Das System der Sittenlehre*); Fichte (2005, 19f.) and series IV, Vol. III, 520f. (*Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo, Nachschrift Krause*); Fichte (1992, 470)). Just as in his teaching at the University of Jena, which gave rise to the printed version of his ethics, so did Fichte in his teachings at the University of Berlin aim at having the presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* proper be followed by that of his ethics. Thus after the completion of his lectures on the *Wissenschaftslehre* proper in the winter semester 1811/12, Fichte first turned to the doctrine of right and then to ethics in the following summer semester (cf. Fichte 1962ff., series II, Vol. XIII, 307–92). All these lecture courses were published only posthumously. Moreover, Schopenhauer did not attend Fichte's lectures in the summer of 1812, but instead sat in on Schleiermacher's lectures as well as those in other disciplines (philology, zoology, entomology and geognosy).[22] In this situation, the recourse to Fichte's published ethics from the year 1798 could offer to Schopenhauer a suitable substitute. In light of the fact that Fichte's earlier presentation of ethics is in many respects superior to the later, much shorter exposition, which repeatedly refers to the earlier version, one might even consider it a fortunate circumstance that Schopenhauer felt compelled to critically engage with Fichte's ethics in its more detailed version from 1798.

Against the backdrop of Schopenhauer's critical reception of Fichte in the "leaden fairy tale," it is in particular a short line of reflections, comprising barely two pages, in Schopenhauer's notes on Fichte's *System of Ethics* that deserves attention and closer scrutiny (Schopenhauer 1966–1975, Vol. II, 349f.).[23] The pertinent elaborations of Schopenhauer refer to the section on "The Will in Particular," in which Fichte elucidates his concept of the will (Fichte 1962ff., series I, Vol. V, 147–52).[24] Schopenhauer even indicates the precise pagination of Fichte's text. Schopenhauer first records his assessment; he states: "contains many a thing worth reading about the will," and then immediately contrasts this with his own elaborations.

In the argumentative expositions that form the object of Schopenhauer's rejoinder, Fichte distinguishes between the formal freedom of the will and its material freedom. By freedom of the will "in its material significance" he understands the "faculty of choosing" (*Vermögen zu wählen*) or of the "power of choice" (*Willkür*). Yet for Fichte, the choice of the will *qua* power of choice does not only consist in the decision between morality and immorality, but also includes the choice, guided by prudence, between different morally irrelevant goals of action. Both the choice according to the basic principles of prudence and that according to the principles of morality presuppose the ability to distance oneself from the goals of action that immediately impose themselves and to reflect upon what is to be done. Fichte understands this aspect of freedom, viz., the freedom from reasons for action of all kinds that marks the free will as such, as the latter's "formal freedom" (Fichte 1962ff., series I, Vol. V, 151).

In his critical reaction to Fichte's elaborations on the will and the power of choice, Schopenhauer undertakes a significant reinterpretation of the power of choice, in the course of which he separates the freedom of the power of choice and the freedom of the will by sharpening the Fichtean distinction between the material freedom of the power of choice as the freedom *of* choice and the formal freedom of the will as the freedom *from* choice and by conceiving the latter even more radically. Schopenhauer does so by equating the power of choice with practical reason – wholly conscious of Kant's entirely different identification of practical reason with the will, and not with the power of choice,[25] and therefore immediately adding parenthetically "no matter how much the Kantians may cry out." According to Schopenhauer's understanding, the power of choice includes "the deliberate choice among the objects of desire," which leaves open whether objects of a moral, an extra-moral or an immoral desire are concerned.

In Schopenhauer's eyes, however, any such choice presupposes the liberation of the chooser from the "fetters of the present" ("Fesseln der Gegenwart") and to that extent involves "that it [the power of choice] has thrown off the limitation of time." It is precisely in this circumstance that Schopenhauer sees the characteristic difference between the human being and the animal. Human beings are able to determine their acting through all kinds of rational reflection (those of instrumental-prudential rationality as well as substantial-moral rationality) and in freedom from immediate impulses. For Schopenhauer, this and this alone is practical reason. Thus, unlike the "Kantians" he cites (again one would have to think of Reinhold (1792, Vol. II, 259, 281) in particular),[26] Schopenhauer does not focus on the aspect of decision in the concept of the power of choice – which would involve a potentially irrational element, but on the aspect of deliberation, a deliberation guided by reason and free from the immediate efficacy of extra-rational grounds.

Schopenhauer's assignment of practical reason to the power of choice goes hand in hand with his dissociation of the will, to the extent that it is to be radically distinguished from the power of choice, from reason in general. But then the freedom of the will, which is to be distinguished from the freedom of choice on the part of the power of choice, can no longer consist in the former's rational self-legislation or in autonomy and autocracy, respectively, as Kant would have it.[27] Rather, Schopenhauer regards the specific freedom of the will to be "the ability to destroy the entire personal will" ("die Fähigkeit der Vernichtung des Ganzen Eigenwillens"). The supreme law of this new kind of freedom runs as follows: "you shall not will anything" ("du sollst nichts wollen"). Thus in the context of his critical discussion of Fichte's *System of Ethics*, to be dated to the year 1812, Schopenhauer already has formulated his own fundamental position in ethics, even if in this early passage the freedom of the will appears to consist in negative willing (willing nothing) rather than in the negation of willing (not-willing), as will be the case in Schopenhauer's mature ethics. Schopenhauer's brief critical text on Fichte's *System of Ethics* turns out to be a seminal text for Schopenhauer's own philosophy and especially for his ethics of the denial of the will.

Yet Fichte's ethics does not only supply the external occasion for Schopenhauer's discovery of the quietistic principle of morality. A closer look at Schopenhauer's justification and explanation of his moral principle, to be found in the same text on Fichte, can show that Schopenhauer's ethical position is directly influenced by Fichte's ethics as well as his *Wissenschaftslehre* and, beyond that, by Kant's moral philosophy. Thus Schopenhauer's ethics of non-willing arises out of the spirit of the Kantian-Fichtean moral philosophy.

First, it has to be stressed that the will in the annihilation of which the faculty of the freedom of the will is supposed to consist is specified by Schopenhauer as the "personal will" (*Eigenwille*), more precisely as "everyone's personal will' (*aller Eigenwille*). This might indicate that a will different from the personal will might remain even after the latter's annihilation and only then first come into its own, as might be surmised from Kant's conception of a pure or intrinsically good will. Yet Schopenhauer's specification of the will to be negated as being the personal will does not prepare the substitution of one type of will (personal will) through another type of will (pure will). Rather, on Schopenhauer's understanding, the negation of the personal will puts something entirely different from the will into the latter's functional role of initiating action. What determines action is no longer individual willing, but "a supersensory principle . . . that possesses laws so strict that everyone knows what it will effectuate in each possible case."

The annihilation of the personal will does indeed destroy all willing, but not all acting. With the cessation of willing, the acting authority passes over from the individual and its will to the moral law. Schopenhauer explicates this process of the de-individualization of acting by drawing on Kant's "*objective* moral law" (emphasis in the original). The subjective acting, initiated by the subject, gives way to the objective efficiency of the law itself. However, whereas in Kant the acting determined through the moral law continues to be considered as grounded in some willing – namely in pure, moral willing , Schopenhauer believes that he can dispense with the recourse to willing, or better: that he has to dispense with it. For him, willing is bound up with individuality, and hence when individuality ceases, willing also ceases. Schopenhauer ascribes the

function of initiating acting, which has become newly vacant due to the suspension of willing, to the ought itself. It deserves noting that in so doing Schopenhauer does not employ Kant's coinage "the ought" ("das Sollen"; nominalized infinitive) but the term "an ought" ("ein Soll"; nominalized third-person singular), which is the terminology employed in Fichte's later philosophy, including the presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1812 so well known to Schopenhauer (Fichte 1962ff., series II, Vol. XIII, 162).

For Kant, moral action consists in the agreement of willing with the moral ought in so far as this agreement is intended for its own sake.[28] But already Fichte dissociates the absolute norm from the willing and considers the ought as an independent supra-individual principle of action that employs the individuals as its vehicle (Fichte 1962ff., series II, Vol. XIII, 322). Fichte's conception of supra-individual acting is not even confined to the later Fichte, but can already be found in the *System of Ethics* of 1798. Schopenhauer follows Fichte in this view of the matter when he reworks the *System of Ethics* in the notes to be dated to 1812, defining the relation between willing, ought and the moral law as follows: "this *ought* suspends *willing*," and goes on to say: "I, my *self*, the individual no longer acts at all but is the tool of something unnamable, an eternal law," and finally: "Instead of my will it is the relation between subject and object (the deed) that is to be determined through something else (the unnamable)."[29]

Whoever is familiar with the basic elements of Schopenhauer's elaborated conception of ethics from the second half of Book Four of *The World as Will and Representation* will not fail to see the far reaching identity in principal matters between Schopenhauer's mature ethics and his early reflections analyzing Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and ethics – as well as that between Schopenhauer's metaphysics-*cum*-ethics of the denial of the will and Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre-cum*-ethics of an I that has become depotentialized to the vehicle of the absolute ought. Schopenhauer was able to find the basic elements for overcoming Fichte's leaden fairy tale about the perennial ought nowhere else than in Fichte himself. Whether Schopenhauer's subsequent expulsion even of the Fichtean supra-individual, absolute ought from ethics, and the associated annihilation not only of willing but also of acting, constitutes a systematic advance beyond Fichte would be in need of a further examination. The same holds for the question whether the insistence on the unrepresentable nature of an existence liberated from willing, or rather of such a non-existence, to be found in the elaborated ethics of Schopenhauer's main work, does not leave open a conceptual space for the limitatively conceived and primarily morally interpreted Absolute of the later Fichte.

See also 2 Perception and Understanding: Schopenhauer, Reid and Kant; 5 Schopenhauer and Transcendental Idealism; 6 Schopenhauer's Philosophy of the Dark Origin; 7 The Consistency of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics; 19 Life-Denial versus Life-Affirmation: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Pessimism and Asceticism.

Notes

1 A German version of this chapter appeared in Hühn and Schwab (2006, 365–86). The author would like to thank the editor and publisher for permission to re-use the chapter and David W. Wood for his draft of the English translation. All translations from Kant, Fichte, Schopenhauer and Hölderlin are by the author.

2 "und fast will / Mir es scheinen, es sei, als in der bleiernen Zeit."
3 Regarding Rudolf Malter's interpretation of Schopenhauer, cf. Zöller (1996).
4 The first edition of *The World as Will and Representation*, which is essentially identical with Volume I of the two-volume second edition of 1844, appeared in 1818.
5 On the question of Schopenhauer's relation to German idealism, cf. Zöller (2000; 2003a).
6 This is the title of Book 1 of *The World as Will and Representation* in its didactic version for Schopenhauer's Berlin lecture course from 1820.
7 This is the title of Book 2 of *The World as Will and Representation* in its didactic version for Schopenhauer's Berlin lecture course from 1820.
8 This is the title of Book 3 of *The World as Will and Representation* in its didactic version for Schopenhauer's Berlin lecture course from 1820.
9 This is the title of Book 4 of *The World as Will and Representation* in its didactic version for Schopenhauer's Berlin lecture course from 1820.
10 Cf. FR, 75–120. (*Die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde*, § 21). The reference is to the second, revised edition of Schopenhauer's dissertation from 1847 that reflects the further course of his philosophical development. *De facto* Schopenhauer defends the constitutive role of the understanding for intuition already in the first edition of the dissertation from 1813. Cf. Schopenhauer 1973, Vol. VII, 22f.
11 Cf. also Zöller (2001a).
12 Cf. also Zöller (1999).
13 Cf. the indications in Schopenhauer 1966–1975, Vol. II, 433.
14 Cf. Schopenhauer 1966–1975, Vol. II, 340–344.
15 On the text corpus of Fichte's late work from the years 1801 to 1814 and its relation to Fichte's entire work, cf. Zöller (2003b; 2001b).
16 The two remaining presentations of the *Wissenschaftslehre* following that of 1812, from the fall 1813 and the winter 1814, respectively, remained fragmentary for extraneous reasons.
17 In what follows, there will be no individual references for citations from this relatively short text.
18 Cf. Schopenhauer, *Werke*, Vol. VI, 356ff. (PP II, ch. 5)
19 Cf. Decher (1996).
20 Compare Schopenhauer (1966–1975, Vol. I, 45): "Vermögen uns von aller Zeitlichkeit loszureißen" ("ability to tear us away from everything temporal").
21 On the special systematic status of *The System of Ethics* in Fichte, cf. Breazeale and Zöller (2005, VII–XLIV, especially XX–XXV).
22 Cf. Hübscher (1973, 60).
23 In what follows, there will be no individual references for citations from this relatively short text.
24 The parts of Fichte's text specified by Schopenhauer are to be found on 148–51. Cf. also Fichte (2005, 149–53).
25 Cf. Kant (1900ff., Vol. IV, 412 (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*)); Kant (1900ff., Vol. V, 24f. (*Critique of Practical Reason*)); Kant (1900ff., Vol. VI, 226f. (*The Metaphysics of Morals*)). English translations of these works, with marginal indication of the pagination of the Academy edition, can be found in Kant (1996).
26 On the different assessment of the relation between reason, will and choice in Kant and Reinhold, cf. Zöller (2006); simultaneous publication as special issue, Zöller (2005).
27 Cf. Kant (1900ff., Vol. IV, 440 (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*)); Kant (1900ff., Vol. V, 33 (*Critique of Practical Reason*)); Kant (1900ff., Vol. VI, 383 (*The Metaphysics of Morals*; there "Autokratie")).
28 Cf. Kant (1900ff., Vol. IV, 455 (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*)); Kant (1900ff., Vol. VI, 391 (*The Metaphysics of Morals*)).

29 Emphasis in the original. In the final citation, the grammatically correct phrase would be: "Statt durch meinen Willen . . ."

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